GAME PLAYER'S AWARDS!

A Signal Research Publication

GAME PLAYER'S™ PC STRATEGY GUIDE

$3.95
$4.95 CANADA
Vol. 3, No. 2
Display Until
May 15, 1990

CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN: TOP D&D® ADVENTURE!

REVIEWS:

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI
STARFLIGHT 2
HARDBALL II
LEISURE SUIT LARRY III

FIRST LOOKS:

HARPOON
ABC MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL
& MUCH MORE!

GUIDE TO PC SOUND ENHANCERS

FIRE AND STEEL!
TANK SIMULATIONS ROUNDUP

01095
0 71486 01095 1 02

INDIANAPOLIS 500®

THE SIMULATION™

by Papyrus Design

The Experience

- The Sights: Superb 3-D polygon graphics.
- The Sounds: Supports Roland MT-32 and LAPC, AdLib, Tandy and PC sound boards.
- The Colors: VGA, EGA and Tandy 16 color.

The Cars

- Join one of 3 hot teams: Penske Chevrolet, March Cosworth or Lola Buick.
- 8 suspension and chassis adjustments.
- Create and save customized cars.

The Coverage

- Capture stunning 220 MPH crashes with 6 different cameras.
- Watch yourself from any standard network TV camera angle.
- Select instant replays from each camera.

ELECTRONIC ARTS®

HOW TO ORDER Visit your retailer or phone with VISA/MC: USA or Canada, 800-245-4525, Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Pacific Time. Screen shots represent IBM version. Indianapolis 500 and the Winged-Wheel Flags logo art are registered trademarks of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Corporation. Used with permission. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. AdLib is a trademark of AdLib Inc..

Greg Norman's Shark Attack!

THE ULTIMATE GOLF SIMULATOR

AMIGA

AMIGA

It's professional golf at its best with the game's most aggressive and successful player, Greg Norman . . . a state-of-the-art golf simulation with more realistic three-dimensional graphics than you've ever seen before!

Rich in detail, Shark Attack is packed with features not included in lesser games, including:

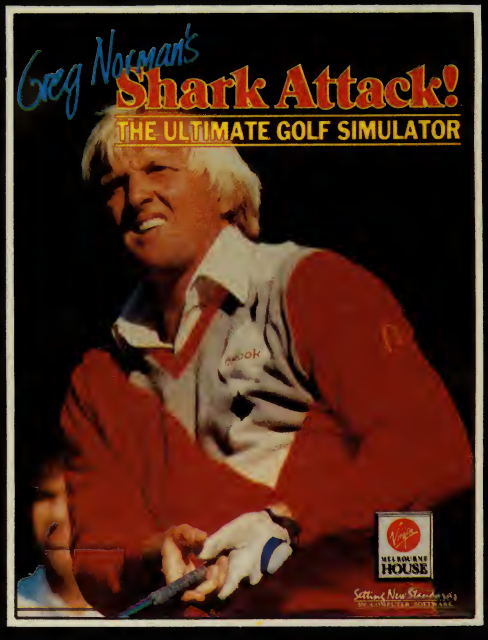
- Pre-game Practice, Matchplay, Greensomes, Strokeplay, and Texas Scramble, all handicapped according to adjustable attributes, with single and team play options (up to four players).
- A professional caddy who can recommend the club to use for each shot.
- On-screen ability to design your own swing, for a game which is more dependent on skill than luck.
- Greg Norman's swing digitized for your instruction in the best golfing form.
- Ability to open and close the club face and adjust the loft, totally on-screen, for greater control.

ATARI ST

IBM EGA

- A 3-D perspective, which can be rotated through 360 degrees from any point. You can really walk each hole, and study the lie of each shot just like you would on a real golf course (one of the features that make this a simulation, not just a game).
- Changing wind and weather conditions, to add to the challenge.

Greg Norman's Shark Attack: the first true golf simulation, produced under the guidance of the Great White Shark himself! As on the pro circuit, total concentration, strategy and control are all required to come in under par!



AVAILABILITY:-

Atari ST	Shipping
MS-DOS	Shipping
Amiga	Shipping
Commodore 64	Spring '90

Virgin MELBOURNE HOUSE

Setting New Standards IN COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Melbourne House Software is distributed by Virgin Mastertronic International Inc.

Virgin MASTERTRONIC

Licensed from Gremlin Graphics.

GREMLIN

VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC
18001 Cowan, Irvine, CA 92714 Tel. (714) 833-8710
Melbourne House is a member of the Virgin Mastertronic Group.

COVER

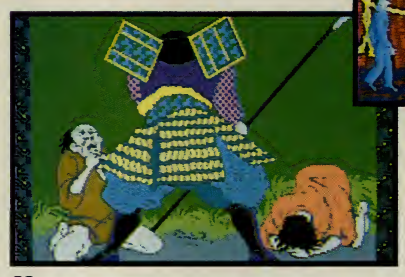
Champions of Krynn from SSI.

DEPARTMENTS and FEATURES

78

36

88



69

DEPARTMENTS

4
EDITOR'S NOTES

8
FIRST LOOKS

Preliminary results from our initial hands-on exposure to some of the newest games.

12
AWARDS

The results of our first annual *Game Player's* PC Awards.

14
GUIDELINES

News and products in the PC entertainment market.

FEATURES

20
COVER STORY

The latest adventure in SSI's acclaimed AD&D series, *Champions of Krynn*, is fantasy role playing at its best.

28
THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC

Game sound effects and music will never be the same now that these sound enhancers have arrived.

36
TANKS A LOT!

A look at the booming field of battle tank simulations for the PC.

COLUMNS

46
THE DESKTOP GENERAL

The news from CES was good for war game fans.

48
ALTERNATE LIVES

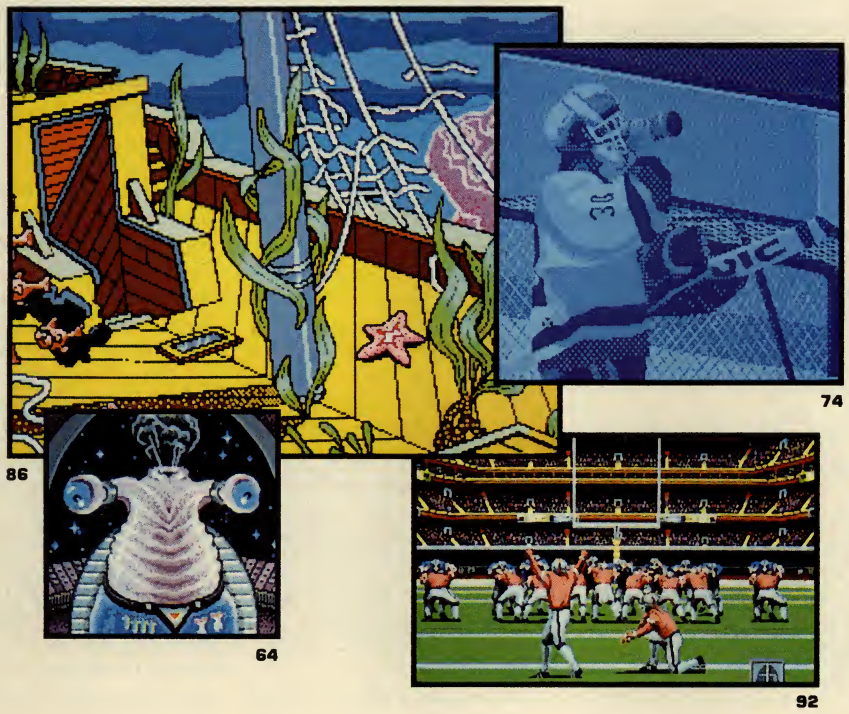
Fantasy role-playing games enter a new decade.

50
VIRTUAL REALITY

Sim City broke new ground in simulation gaming, but there's plenty more coming.

CONTENTS

REVIEWS



SUPER STRATEGY

52 *HERO'S QUEST I: SO YOU WANT TO BE A HERO*

58 *UNIVERSE 3*

64 *STARFLIGHT 2: TRADE ROUTES OF THE CLOUD NEBULA*

69 *SWORD OF THE SAMURAI*

REVIEWS

74 *BATTLES OF NAPOLEON*

76 *F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II*

78 *THE FOOL'S ERRAND*

80 *GOLD OF THE AMERICAS*

82 *HARDBALL II*

84 *LEISURE SUIT LARRY III*

86 *THE MANHOLE*

88 *NEUROMANCER*

90 *POPULOUS*

92 *TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL*

94 *WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY*

96 **DIRECTORY**

GAME Player's™ PC STRATEGY GUIDE

March/April 1990

Robert C. Lock, Editor-In-Chief
Amy L. Pruette, Senior Art & Design Director

Richard T. Mansfield, Editorial Director
R. Selby Bateman, *Guide* Editorial Director
Tom R. Halfhill, *Guide* Editor-In-Chief
Noreen Lovoi, West Coast Editor
William R. Trotter, Senior Writer
Leslie Mizell, Assistant Managing Editor
Gary M. Meredith, Assistant Editor
Matthew A. Firme, Assistant Editor
Neil Randall, Contributing Editor
Richard Sheffield, Contributing Editor
Cynthia Y. Krueger, Copy Editor

Irma Swain, Production Director
Edwin C. Malstrom, Art Director
Laura C. Morris, Graphic Artist
Kelly E. Pinter, Graphic Artist

James A. Casella, Publisher
Tom Valentino, Vice President, Finance
Andrew Eisenberg, Vice President, Advertising Sales
Dominic Mustello, Vice President, Circulation
Jeff Pieper, Circulation Promotion Manager
John G. McMahon, Dealer Sales Manager
Pamela Lambert, Dealer/Customer Service Coordinator

The *Game Player's PC Strategy Guide* (ISSN-1041-5424) is published bimonthly by Signal Research, Inc., 300-A South Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407, USA. Application to mail second class postage pending at Greensboro, NC, and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by the Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: One year (6 issues) US: $18.95. CANADA: Add $1 per issue ($24.95 total). For subscription customer service, call 1-800-222-9631. Postmaster please send change of address to *Game Player's*, P.O. Box L-2032, Langhorne, PA 19047-0672.

Signal Research, Inc., publishes *Game Player's (tm): The Leading Magazine of Video and Computer Entertainment*, the *Game Player's Guides* (tm) to Nintendo and PC computer games; *Game Player's GameTapes* (tm), a series of tutorial videotapes about selected games; *Game Player's Sports For Kids* (tm), a sports magazine for children; and operates the *Game Player's* Pro-Tip Hotline, a telephone service offering hints and tips for selected Nintendo games. Subscriptions to the *Game Player's* magazine: 12 issues US: $17.95. CANADA: Add $1 per issue ($29.95 total). Corporate, editorial, and production offices are located in Greensboro, North Carolina, (919) 299-9902; FAX (919) 854-0963. Advertising sales and circulation offices are located in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, (201) 703-9500; FAX (201) 703-9509. Dealer orders and inquiries should be directed to Dealer Sales at (201) 703-9500.

The Editors welcome company product information for all video and computer games. Such materials should be addressed to: Editor, *Game Player's*, P.O. Box 29364, Greensboro, NC 27429, USA. Overnight delivery parcels should be addressed to 300-A South Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407. Editorial telephone and FAX numbers are noted above. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned or acknowledged.

A publication of Signal Research, Inc. Robert C. Lock, Chairman and CEO; James A. Casella, President; Richard T. Mansfield, Executive Vice President; R. Selby Bateman, Group Vice President.

Entire contents copyright 1990, Signal Research, Inc. All rights reserved; reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. *Game Player's Guide*, *Game Player's*, *Game Player's GameTapes*, and *Game Player's Sports For Kids* are tradenames of Signal Research, Inc. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. Microsoft and MS-DOS are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. Tandy is a registered trademark of Tandy Corp.

Products named in these pages are tradenames, or trademarks, of their respective companies. Signal Research, Inc., an independent publishing company, is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in *Game Player's PC Strategy Guides*.

EDITOR'S NOTES

THE PC GAME PLAYER'S WORLD

You'll notice some major changes in this issue of the *Game Player's PC Strategy Guide*: a variety of special feature articles, more in-depth reviews, first looks at a bevy of new games, and several new columns covering military combat and strategy games ("The Desktop General"), fantasy role-playing games ("Alternate Lives"), and simulation games ("Virtual Reality").

You'll also notice we've kept the fundamentals you've told us you like: plenty of color screens to give you a better idea of each game's look and feel; a wide cross-section of different games now becoming available; and game coverage that lets you know exactly why and how these games are pushing the envelope of computer entertainment.

We've spent time over the past few months talking to key software developers and publishers and to a lot of you, our readers, to discover what games you like, what you want to find out more about, and just who you are. The results have been both encouraging and exciting. Our recently concluded reader survey, conducted for *Game Player's* by Media Research, and our discussions with some of the top industry insiders have reaffirmed what we expected: PC game players are serious about their fun, ready and willing to buy computer games that challenge and intrigue them, and eager to experiment with innovative and well-produced entertainment products.

Not surprisingly, game developers and publishers want to expand the audience of computer game players. The explosion of the videogame market by Nintendo and, more recently, the Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 game systems has both frustrated and

continued on page 6

National Advertising Sales:

Andrew Eisenberg
Signal Research, Inc.
23-00 Route 208
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
(201) 703-9500

Regional Advertising Representatives:

Midwest:
Milt Gerber
John R. Zimmerman
Gerber/Kamikow
570 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015
(312) 405-0400

Southern California,
Arizona, Nevada:
Ed Winchell
Ed Winchell Co.
22700 South
Crenshaw Blvd.
Suite 215
Torrance, CA 90505-3050
(213) 530-4693

Northwest:
Kathi L. O'Neil
500 Airport Blvd.
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 579-0258

Marketplace Advertising:
Bonnie Black
Signal Research, Inc.
23-00 Route 208
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
(201) 703-9500

Please send all advertising materials to Jan Sebastian, Production Coordinator, *Game Player's*, 300-A South Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407.

You've bridged mighty rivers and tunneled majestic mountains. Now you're at the throttle of an $850 million Railroad Empire.

With your next move, it could all go up in smoke.

Play the longshot.

Exercise shrewd business savvy as you maintain a delicate balance between revenue-building passenger lines and empire-building freight lines.

You're at the helm of your own powerful *Railroad Empire,* having magnified modest capital into a burgeoning enterprise.

Strategically manage your resources to maximize your expansion across rivers, through mountains and over gorges.

The ability to design and execute your master plan within a single year is your vital link to success. But remember, every action you take could make you or break you.

Discover the ultimate PC challenge of *Railroad Empire.*

The game includes maps and tools to build your own Transcontinental Railroad or Orient Express.

Railroad Empire.

All it takes is all you've got.

ARTDINK

Requires IBM PC or compatible with CGA or EGA, 384K RAM and DOS 2.11 or higher. Exclusively distributed by Seika Corporation, 20000 Mariner Avenue, Suite 100, Torrance, CA 90503. Phone: 1 (800) 462-5040. *©1989 ARTDINK. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation.*

EDITOR'S NOTES

continued from page 4.

challenged many of the best PC entertainment companies. On the one hand, they see videogames becoming a multibillion dollar business in the U.S. and Canada, while the computer game market has failed to expand in a similar fashion. And on the other hand, the developers and publishers know that many of the sophisticated, best-produced, and most fascinating electronic game environments are appearing on PCs first.

From our perspective, we're convinced that there's plenty of room for the burgeoning videogame market and the continuously evolving PC game industry. While 1989 was not the best year for the computer game market in economic terms, the quality of the products released was generally higher than ever before. And for game companies who astutely targeted, produced, and marketed their computer games, there were profits to be made.

In short, we expect more of the same during the remainder of 1990 — the highest quality PC games will attract a good audience; innovative and well-designed programs will open new doors for the best developers and publishers; and the competition will be fierce. What this means for PC game players is simply a continuing evolution toward better and more varied games.

We are committed to the electronic entertainment market and are convinced that computer games will continue to be among the most exciting and innovative areas of consumer electronics.

The *Game Player's* Awards

Some of the reasons for our continued enthusiasm can be found in our first *Game Player's* PC Awards winners listed in this issue. They represent the best PC games from 1989 selected by our editors. We've chosen a "Best of" group of games that sets the standards for future computer entertainment programs, and we've also included a number of "Excellence Awards" winners composed of games that reveal not only the generally first-rate state of the computer game market, but also the wide variety of games available.

Our announcement of the *Game Player's* Awards at the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas was greeted enthusiastically by those attending, and we plan to make the awards an annual event — even though the selection of the awards was one of the most difficult tasks we have faced.

The Current Issue

Not only are we excited about the new orientation of the *Game Player's PC Strategy Guides*, we're also pleased to be able to bring you in this issue what we think is an exceptionally strong lineup of new games.

Our cover story on SSI's *Champions of Krynn* will be good news to seasoned adventure role-playing fans and an excellent introduction for new gamers looking for their first adventure. The recent explosion in armored tank games gets a rousing salute from senior writer Bill Trotter who brings his considerable knowledge of military history and armaments to the task (as well as to his new column, "The Desktop General").

The current state of sound effects and music for PC gaming comes through loud and clear in contributing editor Neil Randall's overview, "The Sounds of Music." The advances in sound and music quality for PC-compatible games in just the last year have been amazing. That's an area in which we'll be seeing even further advances throughout this year as developers and publishers include more sound drivers and really begin to enhance this traditionally weak aspect of PC entertainment software.

Our "First Looks" section offers a lot to look forward to. The fun ranges from Data East's *ABC Monday Night Football* sports action and strategy game to Origin's all-new *Ultima VI* adventure from Lord British himself, Richard Garriott. There's the ever-popular board game *Risk*, now in computer form from Virgin Mastertronic; Sierra's exceptionally promising Arthurian adventure, *Conquests of Camelot*; and the long-awaited *Harpoon*, a modern naval simulation from Three-Sixty.

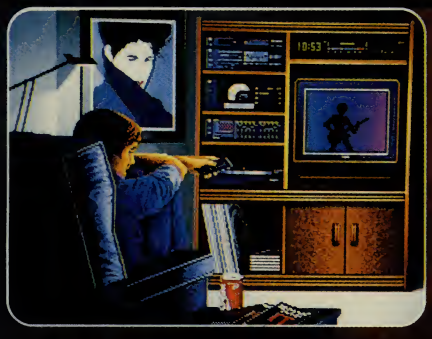
Sports fans will love our "Reviews" section this issue, which includes *Hardball II* from Accolade, a phenomenal baseball game made even better, and two other excellent sports games. And that's just the beginning. Games like *Populous*, *The Manhole*, *Sword of the Samurai*, and *The Fool's Errand* are as innovative as they are enjoyable.

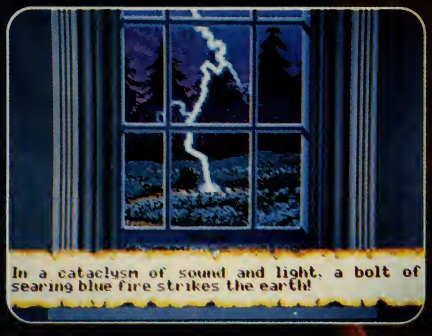
Enjoy this issue, and let us hear from you. We'd like to know about your favorite games, what you'd like to see in future issues, and anything else you've got to say about PC game playing.

Selby Bateman
Editorial Director

Ultima VI

The False Prophet





AWESOME!
256 - color VGA Graphics
DAZZLING!
Sound Board Music

SPECIAL Limited Edition OFFER

Celebrating ULTIMA's 10th Anniversary!

Ultima VI: The False Prophet

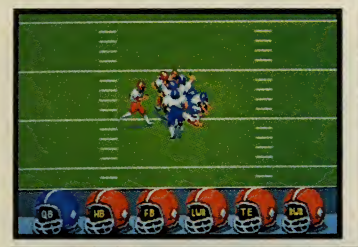
- *EXCITING SPECIAL FEATURES at No Additional Cost... still only $69.95*
- *Personally autographed by Lord British*
- *Exclusive taped interview with Lord British*
- *Unpublished game clues and hints*
- *Specially selected high quality moonstone*
- *FAST, FREE delivery - direct from Origin*
- *This "Special Edition" is not available in stores*
- *Hurry! Supply is limited*

Call: 8am - 5pm (central). MC/Visa accepted. **1-800-999-4939**

ORIGIN
We create worlds.

©1989 Origin Systems, Inc.

ABC MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL



You say you haven't looked at any PC sports games lately? Then you're in for a surprise. **Data East's** *ABC Monday Night Football* is so sophisticated and action-packed that you might forget that the season is over.

From the familiar opening theme through Frank Gifford's pre-game show and into the excitement of fierce battles between the NFL's best teams, *ABC Monday Night Football* has it all. Use the preset offensive and defensive plays, or create your own special moves to bring your team to victory.

The passing offense gives you, as quarterback, the opportunity to review your receivers separately. Then, once the ball's in the air, you can switch to the receiver's viewpoint. The great graphics and sound synthesis put you right on the field.

If you see yourself as a strategic innovator in the mold of a Bill Walsh or a Sam Wyche, the playmaker utility will give you the opportunity to design your own plays and formations. See what happens when you bring back the single wing or the Notre Dame Box offense.

For those who have a greater appreciation of America's pastime instead of gridiron matches, Data East will release *Bo Jackson Baseball* in the first quarter of 1990 as the second game in their MVP Sports line. Promising superior graphics and a statistical interface that updates itself on a daily basis, *Bo Jackson Baseball* should be as exciting and innovative as its namesake.

BLOOD MONEY

When we got the Amiga version of *Blood Money*, practically the whole staff crowded around the computer to watch it being played. While "outstanding" is becoming an overused word, the graphics and music truly were superior to 99 percent of available computer games.

Great news! Judging from a quick look at the PC version, *Blood Money* is one of the finest translations ever. Forget the sound, and be thankful that the action is just as smooth and the creatures just as gorgeous as they were in the original Amiga version. It does require a full 640K memory, however, so you may have to adjust your config.sys and autoexec.bat files before you can play.

Blood Money is also one tough game. Full of arcade action from beginning to end, the **Psygnosis** game places you in four different worlds, each requiring a different mode of transport. You'll fly by helicopter on Gibba, use a submarine on Grone, pull out your jetpack on Shreek, and crawl into a spaceship on Snuff.

And you'll meet a myriad of creatures, such as the walkers out of *The Empire Strikes Back*, huge jellyfish, blood-sucking leeches, crabs that steal you blind — and even if dozens of assorted enemies are on the screen at the same time, there'll be nary a flicker, thanks to the tremendous care taken with the animation. Other treats include weapons shops, gun towers, and an RKO radio tower that reverses the movements of your controls. We could go on, but why not see for yourself?

CABAL

Capcom, a company which has manufactured some of the best arcade titles for the Nintendo system, has a strong game in the PC market with *Cabal*. Unlike many arcade shooters, *Cabal* has the look and feel of a game specifically designed for PC play, instead of conversions from NES or coin-op formats.

When creating an arcade game for the PC, the designers must keep in mind that the controlling mechanism will be neither as lightning-fast as the Nintendo controller, nor anywhere near as robust as the average set of coin-op knobs.

Additionally, the graphics aren't going to be crisp enough to permit the split-second recognition needed to cope with many arcade targets — not unless the graphics are *designed* instead of merely converted. Often these factors are not taken into consideration, and so games such as *Sky Shark* — a popular Nintendo game — become seriously flawed in their PC incarnations.

Cabal offers plenty of challenge (in fact, it's a pretty tough game), but it plays as though it were designed with the PC's peculiarities in mind. It responds smoothly to any good joystick, and the player is lured into game after game by the conviction that *this* time, he'll be able to get through stage two (or three, or whatever). In short, *Cabal* has the classic, obsessive lure of a good arcade shooter.

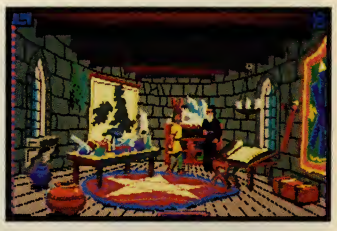
Conceptually, *Cabal* breaks no new ground. You control an anti-terrorist superwarrior who must battle through multiple levels of foes equipped with everything from tanks to submarines. Naturally, you can capture power-up weapons to increase your arsenal.

There is also a helpful graph across the bottom of the screen which tells you how many more enemy targets there are on a particular screen. That's a feature which should be incorporated into more games of this kind, since it spurs the player to try "just one more time."

Games like this don't have to be original to be fun. *Cabal*'s action is intense and its graphics are quite good. Given the generally dismal and frustrating quality of most PC-format shoot-em-ups, *Cabal* is both refreshing and encouraging. Capcom has done a commendable job, and this game goes to the front rank of a crowded, but wretchedly undistinguished, genre.

CONQUESTS OF CAMELOT

The husband-and-wife team of Peter Ledger and Christy Marx has tackled a centuries-old legend in their very first game venture. In *Conquests of Camelot*, soon to be released from **Sierra On-Line**, the Arthurian legends are approached from a refreshing point of view.



The game mixes riddles, puzzles, arcade sequences, clue gathering, and a significant number of moral choices. The story begins with the forbidden love between Gwenhyver and Launcelot, which affects King Arthur's soul to such an extent that a blight has fallen on the land of Camelot.

Three brave knights have journeyed to the Holy Land in a quest to find the Grail and save the kingdom. None has returned. Now Arthur must undertake the quest himself or watch the Round Table fall into ruins. Writing this story, Marx says, was a totally new experience for her, one "about as far removed from a linear, plotted script as you can get."

Using their background in animation, live-action TV, and comic books, Ledger and Marx have developed a game steeped in actual Celtic folklore and rich with authentic detail (for example, the scenes set in Jerusalem have real Arabic graffiti on the walls).

Conquests of Camelot takes a charming and loving look at the quest for the Holy Grail. The game's visual style is reminiscent of the great book illustrations of the past, and the spare, modal soundtrack adds an almost palpable sense of Celtic mystery to the lively goings-on of King Arthur's court. It looks like Sierra has another hit on its hands.

DRAKKHEN

Fantasy role players will appreciate the obvious care that has gone into making **Data East's** *Drakkhen*. The fantastic world of Drakkhen and its inhabitants is internally consistent and completely believable. Characters move in real-time across a rounded, full-color, 3-D landscape. When the day ends, the sky glows with the sunset, and twilight gradually falls.

There's an elaborate musical score, keyed to each different scene in the game, and more than 150 different monsters, each with its own squawk or shriek. Desktop warlocks can play around with more than 200 different spells — some of them zany and bizarre in their effects.

Veteran fantasy role-playing gamers will appreciate the amount of thought and originality that has gone into the magical aspects of the game. The combat system is detailed and bloodthirsty enough to satisfy even the most bellicose monster-basher.

It seems that long ago, the world depended on the mystic power of dragons. But now the last dragon has been killed, and four warriors must find the primordial dragon and ask him to restore magic to the universe.

Data East hopes to make a sizable splash in the fantasy role-playing genre with this game, as well as with its subsequent adventures set in the same universe. Certainly *Drakkhen* is crammed full of features designed to appeal to the widest possible segment of the fantasy RPG market.

HARPOON

Harpoon is the PC adaptation of the highly respected board war game. Thirty months in development, the resulting **Three-Sixty Software** game is an extremely professional and playable game. The project even had the blessing (and the financial help) of best-selling author Tom Clancy, who certainly knows his military simulations.

In *Harpoon*, you take the role of commander of a NATO fleet. Several scenarios are available, each with a wide range of complexity and difficulty. Your task is to fulfill your mission orders as best you can, using the ships, subs, and aircraft at your disposal.

The main screen is divided into four sections. At the top left is a small window that shows the strategic area. Below it is a larger window with details (in four different magnifications) of the local area of one of your groups. At the bottom right, a constantly changing window gives you information, displays animated battle sequences, and lets you make choices. However, the most important window is at the top right—from here you essentially operate the game.

Pull-down menus and pop-up windows let you choose everything you need. And at any point in the game, you can leave the main screen and ask for details about your fleet. Such requests yield colorful, information-packed screens complete with a drawing of the ship or aircraft in mind, its weapons, and its sensor capabilities.

Though we've heard reports of a few crashes with the first version of *Harpoon*, we haven't had a problem and Three-Sixty responds that any initial bugs have been corrected. But bugs or not, this is a game worth a serious look. And it's a must for naval buffs.

RISK

The board game may be 30 years old, but *Risk*, that familiar pastime of world conquest, has just been translated by **Leisure Genius**, the same company that brought *Scrabble* to computer screens.

Risk plays remarkably like the board game, with a number of pull-down menus to hurry even a novice into the game. You can play a solitaire game to get used to the controls, or play against as many as five players — human, computer, or a combination of both.

Starting with a certain number of countries and armies, your goal is to attack and outwit the occupied or neutral countries around you. Different missions and varying strategies guarantee a different game every time you play, but only if you dare to take the risk.

For example, the British and U.S. versions differ on certain playing procedures. You can play either version or shortened versions of each — or you can mix and match various playing options to create a custom-made *Risk* that suits your own taste.

The world map won't fit on one screen with sufficient detail in the CGA and Tandy 1000 graphics versions of the game, so the map is split in two. You move back and forth between the two areas via the keyboard, mouse, or joystick. The EGA and Hercules versions have the world map on one screen.

Leisure Genius has released *Clue Master Detective* for personal computers. Up to ten players can try to out-deduct their opponents to find out who killed whom, in what room the crime took place, and with what weapon.

A programming bug in an early version of Clue fouled up the keyboard controls for the game, but a company spokesperson says the glitch has been corrected. Maybe it's a case for Colonel Mustard to investigate.

ULTIMA VI: THE FALSE PROPHET

Your first look at Richard ("Lord British") Garriott's *Ultima VI* is likely to bring gasps of astonishment. We got a sneak preview of *Ultima VI* with VGA graphics, and the opening sequence of this eagerly awaited game is one of the most breathtakingly beautiful we've ever seen.

Having delivered himself of the morally and aesthetically consistent trilogy of *Ultima III* through *V*, Garriott has rethought both the concept and interface for this sixth adventure. The departure is radical enough to risk alienating that large body of gamesters who just want more of the same from their favorite authors, but it will surely delight many *Ultima* fans and entice many newcomers by virtue of its beauty and ease of play.

In **Origin's** game, you portray the Avatar. At the beginning of your adventure, you have been captured by gargoyles — the same creatures who have attacked Britannia. You must stop them, but first you must find out *why* they have invaded. Are they simply evil, or is there an underlying reason for their behavior?

Garriott has designed an interface, by the way, that is so clear, logical, and inviting that you could play a good chunk of this game without even looking at the manual.

GP

GAME Player's™ FIRST ANNUAL 1989

Here they are, the winners of our first annual PC game awards! These are the best and the brightest in PC entertainment as chosen by our editors.

PC GAME OF THE YEAR
SIM CITY
— MAXIS SOFTWARE

In its educational value, graphic richness, and sheer fun, *Sim City* is a remarkable achievement. This game lets you try your hand at creating your own utopian city and then seeing if you can do a better job of running it than your favorite mayor. *Sim City* depicts the dynamics of urban planning so realistically that the program has been adopted by several universities. Quite simply, it is one of the most clever and addictive games ever devised for personal computers — and it's more fun than a model train set!

BEST PC SPORTS GAME
LAKERS VERSUS CELTICS
— ELECTRONIC ARTS

The first NBA-licensed basketball game to hit the market, *Lakers Versus Celtics* offers a rousing simulation of the high-velocity excitement of championship basketball, presented in graphics so detailed that you can actually recognize your favorite players not only from their uniform numbers, but also from their appearances and playing styles. The balance between coaching strategy and in-your-face action is superb, and the animation is outstanding throughout. Many good sports programs entered the marketplace during 1989, but even in the face of all that competition, *Lakers Versus Celtics* stands out as a champion.

BEST PC STRATEGY GAME
PIPE DREAM — LUCASFILM GAMES

This is a game which proves that simple ideas are often the best. All you have to do is lay pipe for a super new pipe cleaning chemical called "flooz," using spare parts stacked on the side of the screen and trying to stay ahead of the icky green goo. The fancier the pipe network, the more points you get. It's fast, zany, and addictive — one of our writers had to remove *Pipe Dream* from his hard drive because he wasn't getting any work done. It's *that* kind of a game, and, with 36 levels, it's different every time you play. *Pipe Dream* is destined to become a classic on the order of *Tetris* or *Breakout*.

BEST PC MILITARY STRATEGY GAME
FIRE BRIGADE
— PANTHER GAMES

No military campaign in history equaled the epic sweep and immensity of the struggle between the Red Army and the German Wehrmacht during World War II. Although numerous games have tried to simulate the war on the Eastern Front, none has succeeded as well as *Fire Brigade*, which recreates in detail the savage battles for Kiev in November, 1943. Graced with a lucid and logical playing system, splendid graphics, and a wealth of accurate historical detail, *Fire Brigade* plays as smoothly as it looks and gives desktop generals an uncanny illusion of being in command of two of the mightiest armies that ever fought.

BEST PC FLIGHT SIMULATOR
F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER — MICROPROSE

In program after program, MicroProse publishes high-tech computer simulations that are both realistic and entertaining. In a field as crowded as that of flight simulators, a game really has to be good to stand out, and *F-19 Stealth Fighter* has everything going for it: realistic controls, a wealth of technical features, smooth 3-D graphics, excellent documentation, and great entertainment value. Our editors have flown a lot of simulated aircraft in the past 12 months, from World War I Spads to interstellar starfighters, but no other simulation offered quite as much satisfaction as *F-19*.

BEST PC NON-FLIGHT SIMULATOR
THE DUEL: TEST DRIVE II
— ACCOLADE

Car simulations remain one of the most popular entertainment genres for very good reasons: They let us drive cars we could never afford in real life, and drive them in ways we would never dare on real highways. *The Duel* is more than just a single game, it's an expandable, modular system of driving adventures featuring legendary cars, furious competition, and some of the finest scenery programs on the market. Not many will ever know the thrill of actually driving a Lamborghini at 100 miles per hour through the scenery of Big Sur, but thanks to Accolade, we can savor the simulated experience any time we want.

BEST PC FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAME
THE MAGIC CANDLE
— MINDCRAFT

This outstanding fantasy role-playing game has all the right ingredients: an imaginary world that is both vast and internally consistent; a compelling story line; good combat and spell-casting systems; and, above all else, a sense of wonder that transcends the computer medium while exploiting that medium's technical possibilities to the fullest. *The Magic Candle* gives you an entire world to explore, and plenty of time to do it in without having to stop and fight monsters every five minutes. Richly inventive, smoothly playable, filled with user-friendly attention to detail, *The Magic Candle* stands out dramatically in a very crowded field.

BEST PC ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYING GAME
SPACE QUEST III
— SIERRA ON-LINE

Like all of Sierra's interactive games, this extravagant space adventure features top-notch graphics and a captivating, though exceedingly bizarre, plot: Roger Wilco, galactic custodian, strives to rescue the Two Guys from Andromeda, the best game designers in the universe. *Space Quest III* even includes "Astro Chicken," an arcade-style sub-game which is, itself, delightful. Sierra's universe is a wild and slightly absurd place and *Space Quest III* is chockfull of great sight gags, puns, and witticisms. The scenes at the orbiting Monolith Burger stand are worth the price of admission all by themselves!

(Selections for the 1989 *Game Player's* PC Awards do not include games introduced after November 1, 1989. Games introduced during the final two months of 1989 are eligible for the 1990 Awards. Signal Research, Inc., an independent publishing company, is not affiliated with any of the companies or products under consideration for the PC Awards.)

PC GAME AWARDS

BEST PC SCIENCE FICTION GAME
STAR SAGA: TWO
— MASTERPLAY

There's nothing else on the market quite like the *Star Saga* series: massive, epic adventures that blend computer playing, role playing, text adventuring, and even board gaming into one single entertainment extravaganza. Although darker and more sinister in tone than its predecessor, *Star Saga: Two* is still a rollicking, all-stops-out space opera, full of technomarvels, bizarre, often dangerous alien cultures, and a wicked sense of humor.

BEST PC ARCADE/ACTION GAME
TONGUE OF THE FATMAN
— ACTIVISION

Described by one editor as "a cross between the barroom scene in *Star Wars* and World Championship Wrestling," this game should probably win an award for its title alone. Fortunately, the rest of the game is outstanding, too, as you match skills with and make bets on the alien gladiators at Mondu's Fight Palace. Activision's graphics are as wild as *Fatman's* title, and the game play is more than satisfactory.

BEST PC VGA GRAPHICS
MEAN STREETS
— ACCESS SOFTWARE

The VGA format is rapidly becoming the new graphics standard for PC entertainment software, and this futuristic hard-boiled detective adventure demonstrates why. Its digitized pictures of characters, landscapes, and gritty urban streets, many of them discreetly and elegantly touched with animation, give this game a vividness, depth, and aesthetic richness that put Access Software on the cutting edge of tomorrow's technology.

BEST PC EGA GRAPHICS
SPACE QUEST III
— SIERRA ON-LINE

Probably no software company has done more to exploit the full potential of EGA graphics than Sierra On-Line. In a sense, this award honors not only *Space Quest III*, but the graphics of a host of Sierra classics as well: the dream-like vividness of the *King's Quest* games; the disturbing, hallucinatory images of the *Manhunter* programs; the warm, sun-dappled atmosphere of *Gold Rush*; and, of course, the witty, gag-filled visuals of all the *Space Quest* games. Bravo, Sierra, for such consistency!

SPECIAL PC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
REALSOUND
— ACCESS SOFTWARE

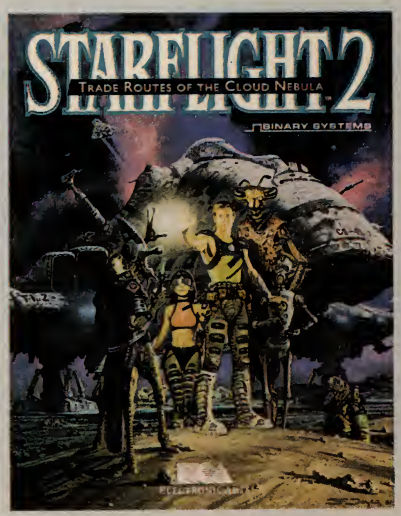
For a long time, the weakest element in any PC game has been the sound — a dreary and tinny assortment of bleeps, bloops, and clicks. Access has broken this sound barrier with its RealSound process, which enables the average computer to produce remarkably lifelike sound effects, music, and even human speech without the addition of any costly accessories. The results have to be heard to be believed.

GAME PLAYER'S PC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

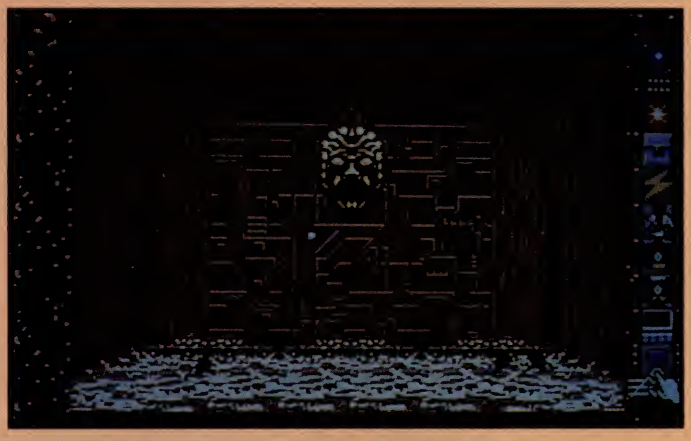
Archipelago (Fanfare/Britannica)
Chessmaster 2100 (The Software Toolworks)
The Colony (Mindscape)
Curse of the Azure Bonds (SSI)
Echelon (Access)
The Faery Tale Adventure (Microillusions)
Genghis Khan (Koei)
Gold Rush (Sierra)
Hardball II (Accolade)
Hidden Agenda (Springboard)
Hole-In-One Miniature Golf (DigiTek)
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure (Lucasfilm)
Jet Fighter: The Adventure (Velocity)
John Madden Football (Electronic Arts)
Kings of the Beach: Professional Beach Volleyball (Electronic Arts)
Manhunter 2: San Francisco (Sierra)
Microsoft Flight Simulator (4.0) (Microsoft)
Nemesis: Go Master (Toyogo)
Neuromancer (Interplay)
Red Storm Rising (MicroProse)
Rommel (SSG)
Search for the Titanic (Capstone/Intracorp)
Steel Thunder (Accolade)
Sword of Aragon (SSI)
'Vette! (Spectrum Holobyte)
Wayne Gretzky Hockey (Bethesda Soft works)
Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego? (Broderbund)
Windwalker (Origin)

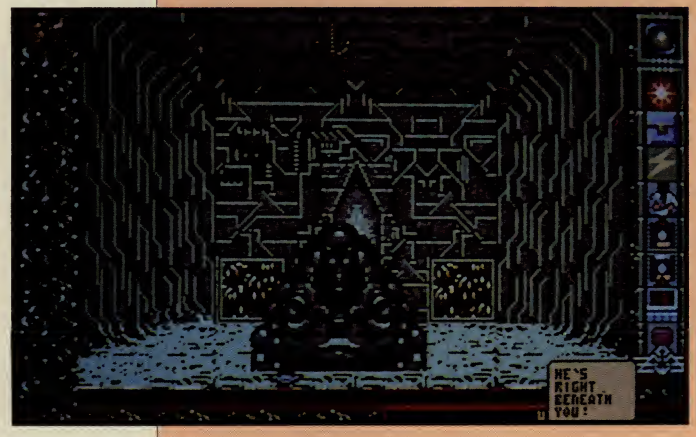
HOW CAN YOU TELL IF A HUMNA HUMNA IS RIPPING YOU OFF?

Watch those eyestalks. One's checking out your goods—the other's sizing up your wallet. Bartering with these mercantile mollusks is a good source of cash and information—and your ticket to the mystery at the heart of the nebula.



HOLY COMPUTER GAMES! *IT'S* BATMAN *AND THE* SCI-MUTANT PRINCESS!





Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Princess

Loosely based on the monster hit movie, *Batman, the Caped Crusader*, features scenes inside the chemical plant, the Gotham City cathedral, and other locales that fans of the film can readily identify. **Data East's** graphics looked good, and the game play was smooth. We were especially taken with the sequence in which you pilot the Batwing through the canyons of Gotham City, trying to cut the cables of the Joker's toxin-filled balloons.

Data East is also developing a hit European game named *Kult* which has been revamped for the American market with the titillating title *Chamber of the Sci-Mutant Princess*. An elaborate puzzle game with quest elements and a slightly bizarre sense of humor, this hybrid concoction is distinguished by some psychedelically vivid graphics.

CHAMPIONS *TAKES ON ALL COMERS*

One of the most exciting developments announced during the Winter Consumer Electronics Show is the imminent PC debut of the best-selling *Champions* series of superhero role-playing games.

The licensing agreement between Hero Games — publishers of the existing paper games — and **Miles Computing** calls for a completely new role-playing system which can be adapted to other genres as well. A spokesperson for Miles Computing predicted that the *Champions* series would be the "*Dungeons and Dragons* of the 90s." And from what we saw, he could well be right. Certainly there's a built-in market, since more than 300,000 copies of the board games have already been sold.

FUTURISTIC ACTION FROM MEDALIST

This spring, **Medalist International** will release *The Punisher*, an action-adventure taken from the Marvel Comic of the same name, with 3-D digitized graphics and over 100 mission options.

A sci-fi adventure from the company is *MegaTraveller 1: The Zhodani Conspiracy*. Players of this game will have over 20

planets to visit and numerous deadly enemies to fight. *Midwinter*, also from Medalist, is a cautionary tale detailing the anarchy brought on by the coming of the next ice age. It features 3-D, fractal-based graphics.

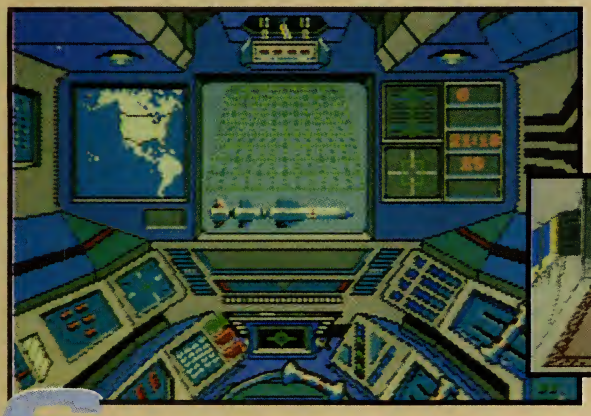
Finally, *Starlord* will also be released. In this strategy game, players battle up to 14 other starlords for control of the entire galaxy.

SPORTS INFO 'ROUND THE CLOCK

Although not strictly a game, the USA Today Sports Center, the world's first dedicated on-line sports information system, does include game playing as one of its main features. **Data East** has now acquired the rights to nationwide retail distribution of the Sports Center package.

As part of the deal, Data East and *USA Today* will collaborate on future sports-oriented software. The first such project, *Bo Jackson Baseball*, will be introduced by late spring and will incorporate realtime, real-life stats via the *USA Today* network. Participants will be able to play opponents all over America using up-to-the-minute data.

TWO NEW SIERRA ADVENTURES



Codename: ICEMAN

Sierra fans have two new games to look forward to: *Codename: ICEMAN*, an adventure simulation, and *Sorcerian*, an action role-playing game.

Codename: ICEMAN was written by Jim Walls of *Police Quest* fame. It puts you aboard a futuristic nuclear sub to solve a detective story that spans the globe. As Johnny Westland, secret agent, you must enter an enemy's Middle Eastern headquarters and rescue the ambassador that terrorists are holding hostage.

Sorcerian, originally a best-seller in Japan, runs the action-adventure gamut, with breath-taking graphics, great music, and exceptional flexibility in game play and character management. Combining arcade action with quest adventure, *Sorcerian* is actually 15 separate games, such as Mystery Jewel, in which you must free creatures of a forest from the spell of a red jewel; or Medusa's Neck, in which you battle an ancient monster who has turned all the villagers into stone.

IS THIS BLOB BLUFFING?

He's not. The Spemin, once the "whipping blobs" of the cosmos, are back—with new weapons, unlimited fuel, and grand hopes of turning the universe into an intergalactic bus depot. Discover the source of their power or you and everyone you know will be the olives in their mucous martinis (shaken, not stirred).

THREE SOURCES OF GALACTIC DOOM

If the next batch of computer games is to be believed, the end of the universe is at hand. Three new games all tell stories of unrest in galaxies far, far away.

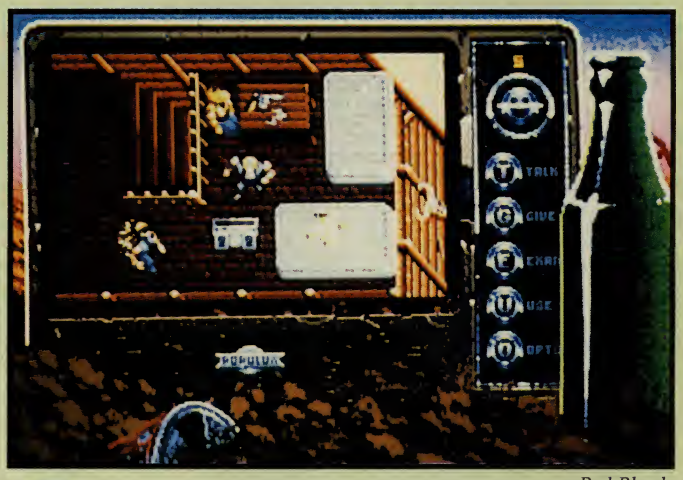
Trouble is brewing on a distant planet in *Unreal* by **Ubi Soft**. On Unreal, an evil guardian has gained control of the elements. Isolde, a maiden from a village located in a peaceful valley, agrees to marry the guardian if he will spare her people. It's up to Artaban, a young warrior, and a copper dragon to save Isolde and restore the elements to the good people of Unreal.

In the 22nd century, Earth's new government, the Galaxy Confederation, has sent its industrial leaders to the planet Selenia. Though Selenia is an uninviting place, the Confederation relies on trade with it. To keep peace between Earth and Selenia, the Confederation creates *B.A.T.*, the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters.

And in *B.A.T.*, another Ubi Soft game, you are a member of the Bureau. When aliens threaten Selenia with bacterial warheads, it's up to you to save the galaxy.

In *At Earthrise*, **Interstel's** new venture, you won't deal with aliens or distant planets. Instead, the action takes place on an out-of-control asteroid on a collision course with Earth. You must search through an abandoned, 100-room mining station to discover the source of the problem and change the asteroid's course.

THE MUTANTS ARE COMING!



Bad Blood

Life's tough in the future. In a time after the Great Fires, the world is divided into humans, earthling mutants, and monsters descended from pre-holocaust animals.

Humans live in the ruins of cities being rebuilt by mutant slaves. Gradually, the humans are relearning technology. But the mutants are beginning to revolt, angry over their own lack of shelter and resources.

In **Origin's** *Bad Blood*, created by *Times of Lore* author Chris Roberts, you're a mutant adventurer who is trying to bring harmony to the rivaling factions. Choose from three characters — a green-skinned, seven-foot giant; a female able to pass as human, but hiding a mutant skill; or a handsome man born to mutant parents — and let the arcade action begin.

SCI-FI NOVELS ARRIVE FOR PC

In the world as seen by novelist George Alec Effinger, information can be wired directly into the human brain. "Moddies" are modules that can change you into someone else, real or imaginary, while "daddies" give you temporary knowledge of any given subject or skill.

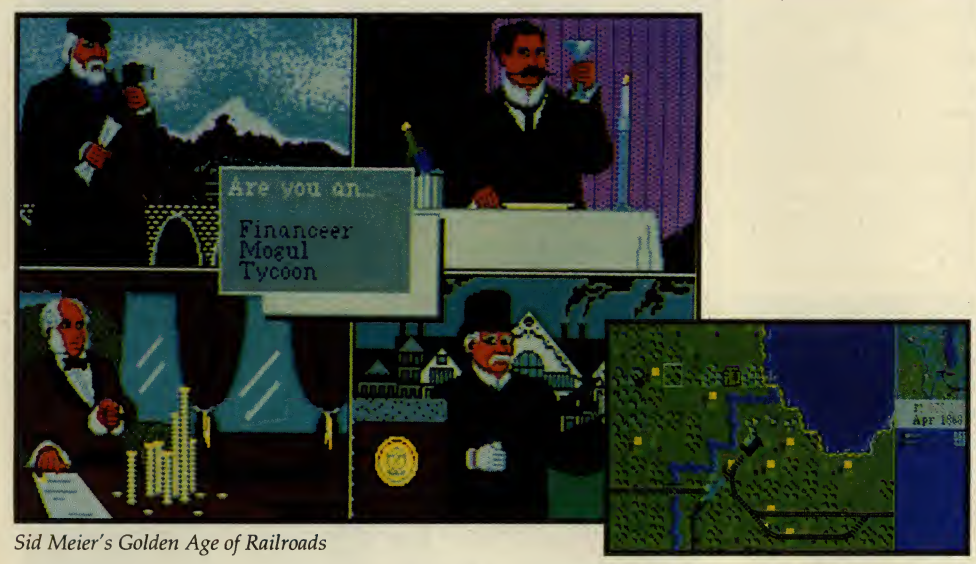
Circuit's Edge, a new game from **Infocom**, is a sci-fi adventure based on two novels by Effinger, *When Gravity Fails* and *A Fire in the Sun*. The game is set in Budayeen, a dangerous, crime-ridden ghetto. You play Marid Audran, a private investigator. Your cases call for intricate combinations of moddies and daddies. You can become a cat burglar, a spy, or a martial arts expert. But using the wrong chip at the wrong time could turn you into a corpse!

HEY, DUDE! IT'S HISTORY WITH BILL AND TED!

It's going to be a "bodacious" summer for fans of last year's movie, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. Not only will the dudes be starring in a sequel, but their first film adventures will be available as a PC game from **Capstone**.

Closely following the film's story line, the game lets you travel along with Bill and Ted as they ride in their telephone booth back through time, looking for such historic persons as Socrates, Genghis Khan, and Napoleon.

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure will use RealSound to digitize voices from the movie, and the graphics will also be taken from the screen.



Sid Meier's Golden Age of Railroads

ACCUMULATE RICHES AS A RAILROAD TYCOON

The author of *F-19 Stealth Fighter* and *Red Storm Rising* has re-created the days of the railroad barons in *Sid Meier's Golden Age of Railroads* by **MicroProse**.

Meier sets the player up as a small businessperson just entering the railroad trade. Starting with a few stockholders, you must consider the type and volume of freight to be shipped, the number of passengers allowed, and the final destination of your rail line. By researching the demands of your service, you must select the types of cars and engines as well.

A successful line must also take into consideration new markets, city population shifts, industry flux, and competition from other companies.

The Golden Age of Railroads lets you design your own railroad from scratch, or use one of the four built-in regions—England in 1828, when railroading was still new; the Eastern U.S. in 1830; Europe from Spain to Istanbul in 1834; or the American West in 1866.

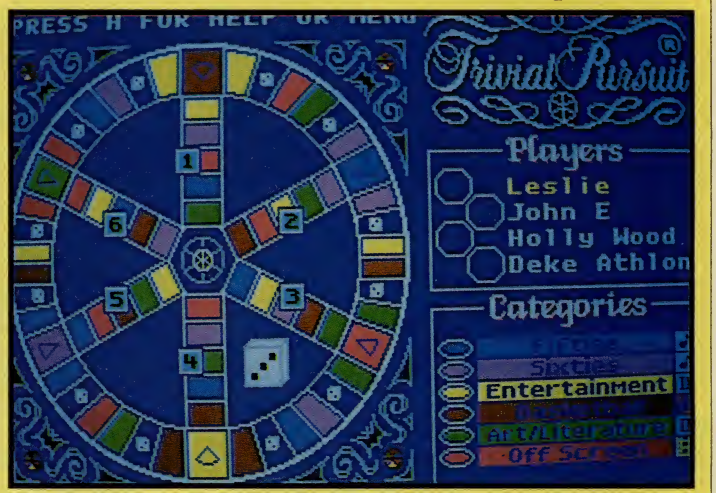
WOULD YOU GIVE THIS DWEENLE YOUR LAST NID BERRY?

He whines. He complains. A real bummer to talk to. Give him a Nid Berry, though, and he might tell you about more than his rheumatism and gas pains. As the galaxy's oldest race, the Dweenle may hold secrets only Nid Berry Bushes can win . . .

GAME SHOW FANS TAKE NOTE

Couch potatoes can become computer spuds if they play even a few of the many game shows now available for personal computers. **Gametek**, for example, has produced computer versions of *Double Dare*, *The Price Is Right*, and *Hollywood Squares*. And you can add *Fun House*, *MTV Remote Control*, and *Win, Lose, or Draw* from **Hi-Tech Expressions** to that list as well. The familiar shows are perfect for family entertainment, but can be played solo as well.

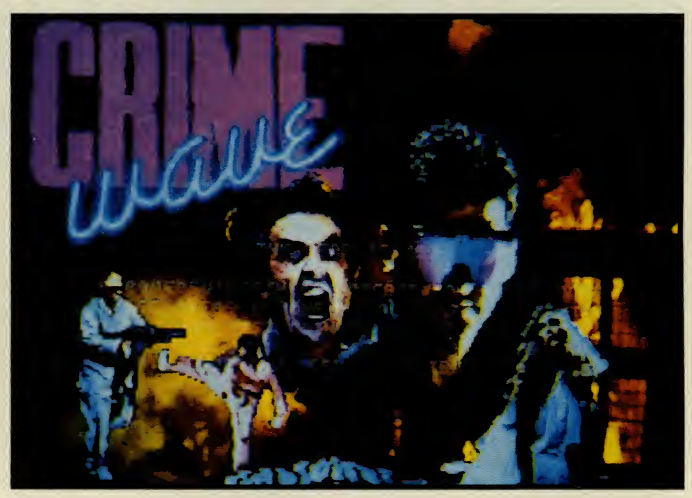
It's not a game show yet, but a lot of people have spent as much time playing *Trivial Pursuit* as they have watching *Wheel of Fortune*. **Parker Brothers** is releasing a computer game of *Trivial Pursuit*, in which you can play in 30 subject categories from five *TP* editions (1980's, Volume II, Sports, Music, and Movies). Up to four people can compete against each other, or you can play against six computer opponents.



Trivial Pursuit

MEAN STREETS *TURN INTO* CRIME WAVE

Crime Wave



Access, whose *Mean Streets* made such an impressive use of digitized photographs and RealSound, will be releasing a new arcade-style game this year.

In the not-too-distant future, the president's daughter has been kidnapped by a big-city crime boss. You're the private eye hired to find her. Though detective work is certainly part of the game, you'll spend more time with the arcade sequences.

Crime Wave uses some of the same techniques as *Mean Streets* to create the kind of realistic, smooth-moving animation, and detailed soundtracks often missing in PC shoot-em-ups. The game's plot is enhanced by digital stills of characters and locales, while the main action (shooting bad guys, finding clues, and staying alive) takes classic arcade form.

GP

BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP, BUT SPACE GOES ON FOREVER.

This is the bumper sticker I slapped on my starship. But I'm the captain, so who says I can't make a statement to my fellow merchants? Besides, it's true. In the vastness of space, there's plenty of room for genuine ugliness. I run into *lots* of aliens — spineless blobs like the Spemin, bizarro mystic broccoli like the Tandelou — that make me shudder and reach for the nearest can of industrial-strength pesticide.

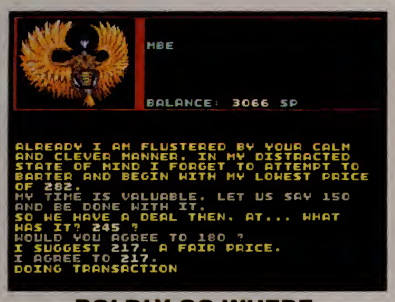
So why do I do it? So I can cop an intellectual toaster and slice and dice some phantom in the nebula? Do I give a flying fungus?

I guess I really do. The planet Arth needs fuel and technology to withstand a Spemin *blob-literation.* So rather than vegetate before the T.V., I talk to vegetables in space and trade with bug-eyed aliens that resemble the hairy mold growing in the shower. And I remind myself: Life is no beauty pageant.

Starflight™ 2 combines the complexity and humor of the smash hit Starflight with new features, aliens, plots and locations. Talk and trade with 29 new alien species, each with individual cultures and personalities. Explore over 500 worlds in search of new weapons and technology: Blasto Pods, System Scanners, Psychic Probes, Mineral Drones, and more.

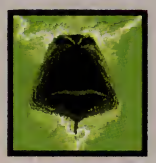
No original Starflight™ experience necessary. Includes security decoder and authentic Humna Humna map device.

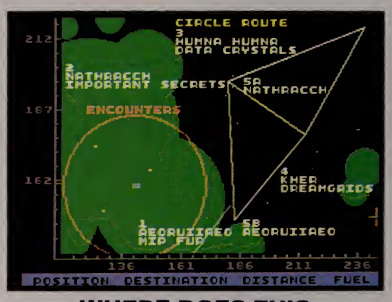
"The world of Starflight 2 is one of the most colorful worlds ever crammed into a computer... It's a great sequel to a great game." — *Computer Gaming World*



BOLDLY GO WHERE NO SALESMAN HAS GONE BEFORE.
Trade with aliens for fun and profit.

FACES ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE.
Secrets only an ally can discover.





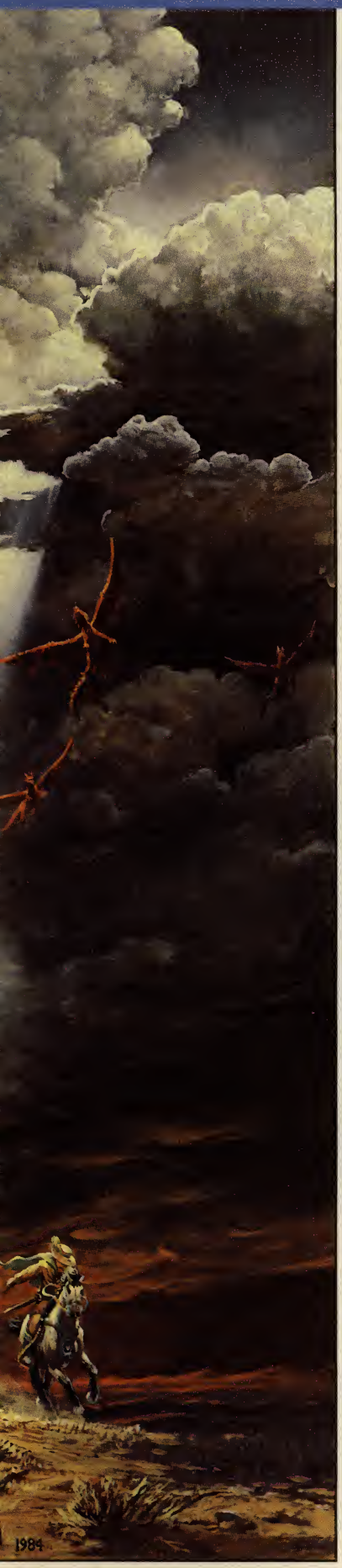
WHERE DOES THIS "HOLE IN SPACE" LEAD?
To oblivion? Or to the heart of the Spemin mystery?

HOW TO ORDER
Visit your retailer or phone with VISA/MC:USA or Canada, 800-245-4525, Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Pacific Time. Screen shots represent IBM version. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation.

For your own "Beauty is only skin deep, but space goes on forever" bumper sticker, send $1.00 and a Nid Berry to Electronic Arts, Attn: Nid Berry Clerk, 1820 Gateway Dr., San Mateo, CA 94404.

ELECTRONIC ARTS®

COVER



Champions of Krynn

NEIL RANDALL

Most fantasy role-playing games seem to come in series. *The Bard's Tale, Wizardry, Ultima*, and *Might and Magic* are all popular, all have their own systems, and all exist not in one installment but two, three, or even five or six. The most recent group added to this list, SSI's *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* series, is proving itself every bit as popular as the rest.

In fact, SSI's *AD&D* games are computerized versions of the role-playing game that started the add-on trend. *Dungeons and Dragons*, released over a dozen years ago by a war games company called Tactical Studies Rules (TSR), became *so* popular *so* fast that TSR found itself producing add-on after add-on. The company expanded, fell on some hard times, retrenched, and expanded once more. Yet despite all the turmoil, one thing was constant: *D&D*, and its more complex version, *AD&D*, remained the most played role-playing games of all. And the add-ons just kept coming.

The add-ons sold well for one main reason: Once a player mastered the basic system, it was to much more enjoyable to add to that system than to learn a brand new one. For the same reason — the enhancement of an already enjoyed mastery of a system — publishers of computer RPGs (role-playing games) adopted the series concept. In a way, it's like watching a new NFL season. You already know the rules; what's interesting now are the variations and unknowns.

At last, you've found the ultimate enemy. Myrtani awaits you, and his power is awesome.

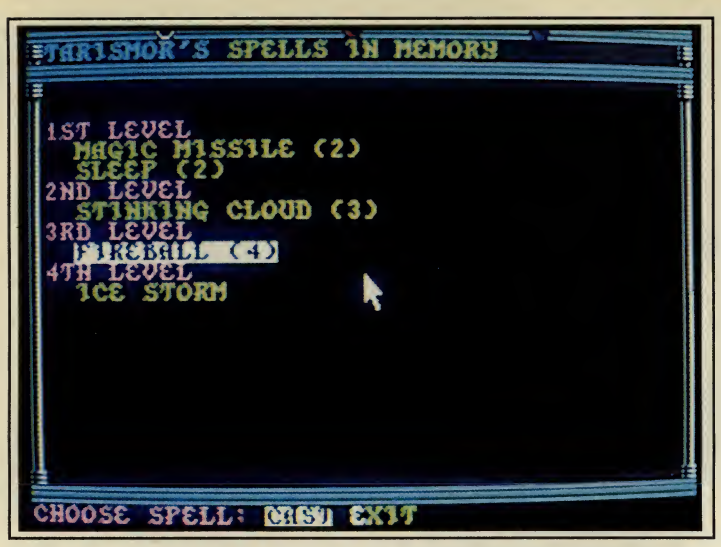
The Need for Innovation

Champions of Krynn is the third installment in SSI's *AD&D* series. The first two, *Pool of Radiance* and *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, have combined sales exceeding 300,000, so the popularity of the series is obvious. But for *Krynn* to succeed it had to be different — a series will sell only if there's reason to buy the next installment.

Victor Penman, the leader of the *Krynn* project for SSI, was well aware of the need for innovation. "With *Krynn*," he explained, "we could no longer count on the unique feel of the game to carry us through." Players who had worked their way through *Pool* and *Curse* would need new features to keep them interested, and the SSI design team was determined to provide those features.

For newcomers and veterans to the series, a quick explanation of how the SSI/TSR collaboration came about might be necessary. Those who have not played one of these games also need a quick run-through of the system in order to understand the extent of the changes.

"Originally," said Penman, "almost three years ago, TSR made it known that they were interested in licensing their *AD&D* system to a computer game publisher. Several companies showed strong interest. I was one of the people who went to TSR in early '87 to present SSI's case for why they should give the license to us. We emphasized that, if neces-



There's no point in holding back against Myrtani. Tarismor has memorized four fireball spells and an ice storm spell. She knows the fireball will work wonders, and she readies it now.

The fireball spell has devastated the battlefield. Only Myrtani remains, and everyone in the party is seriously depleted. Leorlian the cleric is too weak to work a spell on his own.

sary, we would devote all the company's resources necessary to making it work right."

That focus, along with SSI's respected expertise in games emphasizing combat (they had been publishing historic games since well before the advent of the IBM PC), clearly sold TSR on the strategy.

"Officially and contractually," Penman continued, "we have the exclusive license to do games on D&D and AD&D for the home computer market. But TSR approves everything before its release. We weren't sure exactly how this would work out, but they've been extremely reasonable — very eager to work with us. We talk with Jim Ward [of TSR] about the content of the games and the story lines, and once we have something we all agree is good we go ahead and work with it."

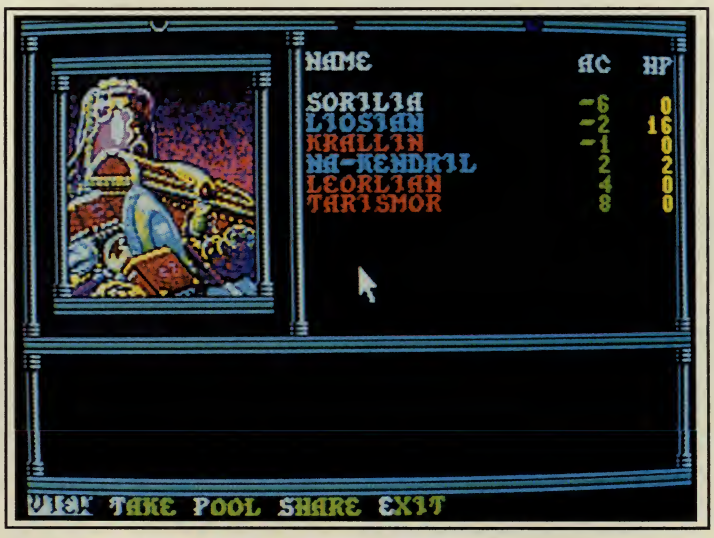
As for Ward's role in the creation of the computer adventures, Penman indicates that he has made some specific suggestions — like easing the way the system generated icons and allowed clerics to turn undead — that have improved play considerably. And because the designers "work very closely with TSR all the way through the development," approval for release is very quick in coming.

SSI's *AD&D* System

To adapt *AD&D* to a computer market meant preserving several integral elements of the original system. First and foremost, the game had to allow a party of adventurers — all perhaps of different races, classes, and levels — to seek out and solve fantasy adventures. Second, *AD&D*'s magic system, in which clerics and magic-users must memorize spells before they can use them (in fact must memorize each one more than once if they want to use it more than once) had to be kept intact.

Third, characters had to be able to advance in levels according to the *AD&D* experience point system. And fourth, combat had to be emphasized because *AD&D* is a combat-intensive game.

You begin a game of *Pool*, *Curse*, or *Krynn* by creating characters, then placing them in the party. Characters range in race from human through dwarf, elf, and even kender, depending on the particular game. Then you assign them to classes — paladin, ranger, knight, fighter, thief, cleric, mage, or a combination of two or more — and determine their individual characteristics. Finally, in a wholly unique touch, you design the icon that will represent each character on the screen during combat. Penman explained that the icon system brings to the computer system the popular idea of using mini-



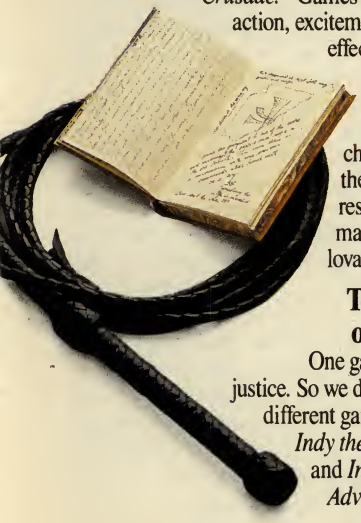
The battle has taken an enormous toll, but Myrtani is destroyed. The fighting's not over yet, but now is the time to collect the spoils.

Oh great, more foes to fight. If these dragons are any good at all, you know you don't have a prayer. Failure looms, even at the end.

ARE YOU READY TO STEP INTO INDY'S SHOES?

Move larger-than-life exploits from the movie screen to the computer screen, and the results are often small potatoes.

Not so with *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.*™ Games that capture the action, excitement, and special effects of the greatest *Indy* movie of them all. And *Indy* the game character has all the style, wit, and resourcefulness that make the big lug so lovable in the movie.



Too much for one game.

One game can't do *Indy* justice. So we designed two very different game experiences: *Indy the Action Game*, and *Indy the Graphic Adventure*.

And in both cases, it seems that Nazi Germany has just declared war on the Jones boys.

Red hot, slam-bam action.

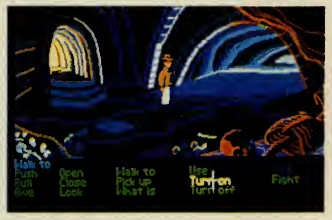
Indy the Action Game delivers classic arcade thrills on a hell-bent chase for the greatest treasure in history—the Holy Grail. As *Indy*, you'll use your whip, your fists, and your wits. Escaping grave-robbing cutthroats. Pulverizing Gestapo goons. And surviving the lethal trials of the Grail Temple itself.

How's your I.Q.?

In *Indy the Graphic Adventure*, you'll find out if you can keep up with the guy with the whip and the hat. Maybe you'll make the same decisions *Indy* made in the movie. Or score higher I.Q. (*Indy Quotient*) points by finding subtle or ingenious alternatives. All the while exploring a stunning world of sights, sounds and characters—many of which you didn't see in the film.

Use Lucasfilm's acclaimed—and enhanced—point n' click interface to toss off a sarcastic one-liner, sweet talk your way out of a tight squeeze, or just haul off and slug the sucker. And thumb through Henry Jones' 64-page Grail Diary for precious and fascinating clues.

Knocking Nazis off precarious Zeppelin catwalks is all in a day's work in ***Indy the Action Game.***



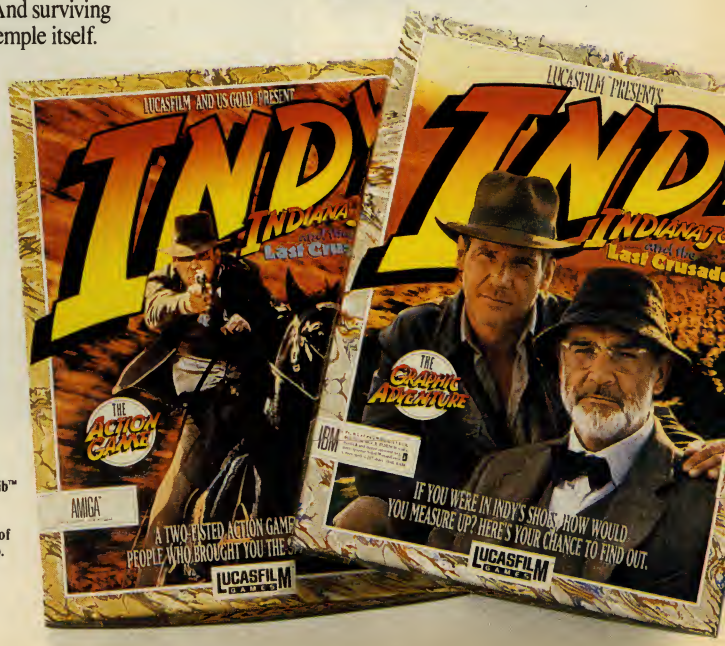
The trail to the Grail is strewn with rats, skeletons, and much, much worse in ***Indy the Graphic Adventure.***

We made a spectacle of ourselves.

Both games bring you the great graphics, exciting camera angles, and stirring sound tracks that made the *Indiana Jones* films so special.

Of course, our development team had the advantage of working with the people who made the movie. And that's how we made sure that when you step into Indy's shoes, your feet are planted firmly in the fire.

LUCASFILM™ GAMES



Action game available for Commodore 64, IBM, Atari ST and Amiga. Graphic Adventure available for IBM (includes AdLib™ sound card support), Amiga, and Atari ST.
TM and © 1989 Lucasfilm Ltd. All rights reserved. Lucasfilm Games, Indy, and Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade are trademarks of Lucasfilm Ltd. IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines, Inc. Commodore 64 is a trademark of Commodore Electronics, Ltd. Amiga is a trademark of Commodore/Amiga Inc. Atari and ST are trademarks of Atari Corp. AdLib is a trademark of AdLib, Inc.

atures in the board game.

To memorize magic in the computer system, you must choose Encamp from the main menu. This places the entire party in camp, during which you can heal characters, transfer items from one character to another, save games, alter the party's march order, and memorize or copy spells.

After selecting which spells you want the cleric/mage to have, you must let that character rest to provide enough time to memorize them. Unless you're in a completely safe place (an inn, for example), the rest period will often be interrupted by a group of enemies. Keeping your magic-users useful, then, requires both strategy and luck.

Combat is the heart of these games because, as Penman explains, "in most *AD&D* games played, combat takes up more time than anything else, and SSI attempted to port *AD&D* to the computer as accurately as possible." If SSI's system draws any sustained criticism, in fact, it is in the sheer amount of combat that occurs. At times, it becomes frustrating — especially if your party has just squeaked out a victory only to face yet another powerful set of foes. Combat in the early sections of the game is exciting; random encounters in mid-game are often simply irritating.

Fortunately, Tas has found some healing potions. Good thing, too, because this red dragon looks alarmingly ferocious. One last battle, and then you can rest. At least, you hope so.

But this is not to denigrate SSI's combat system. Unlike many computer fantasy RPGs (in which you don't actually see the combat played out), these games provide you with a full tactical battle display in which you can control each character individually. They can move, attack, defend, cast spells, and even give up, all at your choosing. If you want, the computer will play the combat out, although you won't want to entrust it to solving important battles. And just like *AD&D*, your characters seem to miss more often than they hit — even in advanced levels.

WHAT'S NEW IN CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN

Champions of Krynn differs from the first two installments in several important ways. The biggest single change, according to Penman, is the fact that players can now select a level for the game. Previously, you had no control over how powerful your own forces were in comparison to enemy forces, except as the system allowed you advance in rank. In *Krynn*, you can use the Alter command in the Encamp menu to select one of five different difficulty levels.

"This was a controversial decision," Penman says, "and not everybody at SSI was in favor of it. My opinion is that we have a tendency to make our games too tough for many people, especially those who just want to see what this kind of game is like. We were hoping in *Krynn* to attract new players to the system, and that's where the different levels came in. If the dedicated hardcore gamers want a challenging game, they can notch it up and play the toughest game we have. But the novices won't get frustrated by having their party quickly die, especially if they choose the powerful pre-generated party included on the disk."

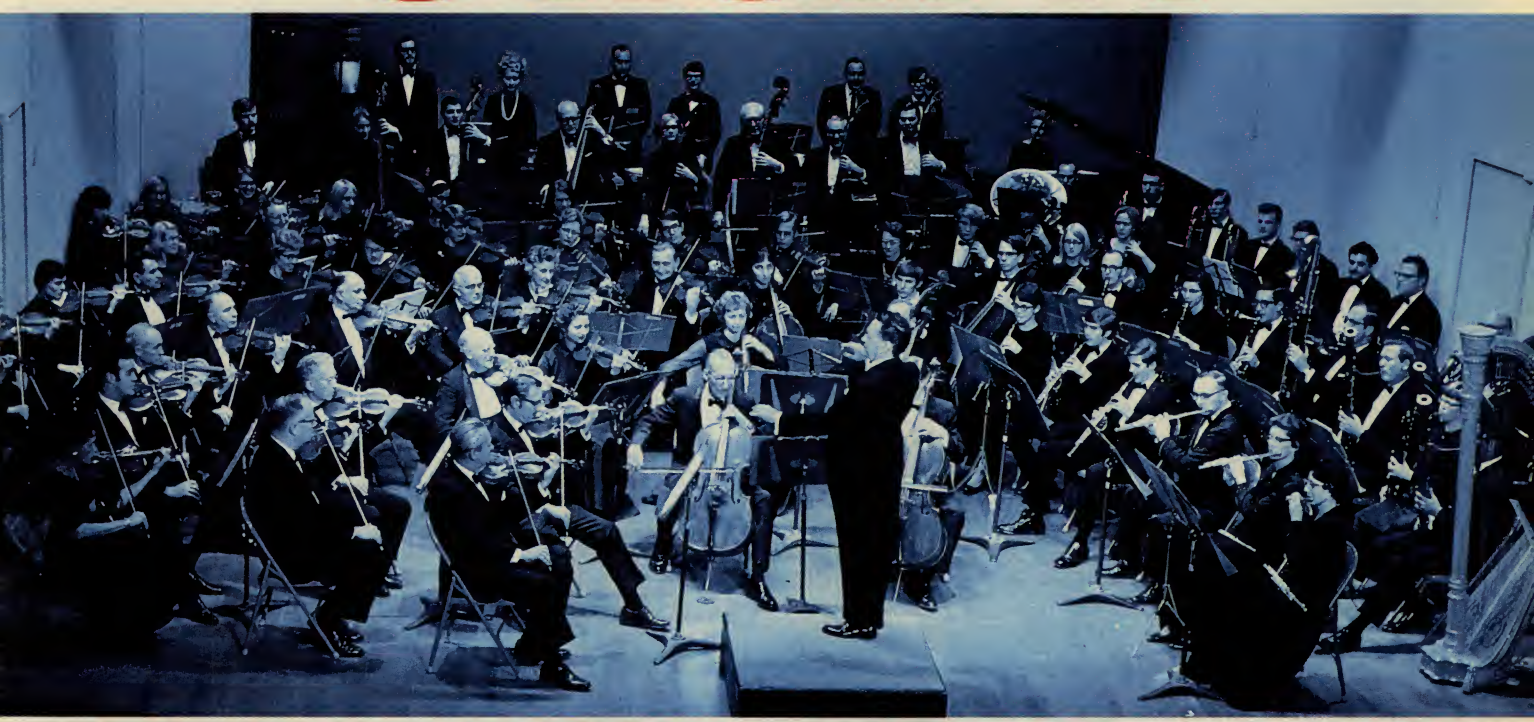
Other changes abound. The possible character classes are humans, half-elves, Silvanesti elves, Qualinesti elves, hill dwarfs, mountain dwarfs, and kender, most of which didn't appear in *Pool* or *Curse*. Clerics are divided into good, neutral, or evil types (only the first two are available to player-characters), and each selects a god to worship who grants special

Leorlian prepares to cast his fireball spell. He doesn't want to harm his teammates, so he'll place it between the dragons. Sorilia has already destroyed one dragon with a single blow from the Dragonlance.

In the heat of battle, Liosian considers changing weapons. His long sword +2 is strong, but he might do better with a two-handed sword. Anything to finish off one of the dragons.

With his five comrades fallen around him, Liosian slashes with his sword and destroys the last dragon. An unlikely hero, he has nevertheless emerged triumphant.

Stick it



in your ear.

For all the sounds you hear when you're playing a game, there are probably as many you don't. Our engineers tell us it isn't so much a reflection on your ears as it is on your computer. They also tell us it's easily corrected. The new Roland LAPC-1 tone generator and intelligent MIDI interface provides IBM-PC and compatible users with a humongous selection of both instrumental and percussion timbres, as well as, and this is the fun part, sound effects–all courtesy of the same legendary L/A Synthesis you'll find on our MT-32 Multi-Timbral Sound Module.

1989 Winner PC Magazine Award for Technical Excellence

While the LAPC-1 Sound Card is becoming the industry standard for playing games, with the optional MIDI Connector Box it also becomes the standard for creating music.

There's something else our engineers tell us, namely how quickly you can connect an LAPC-1 to your stereo.

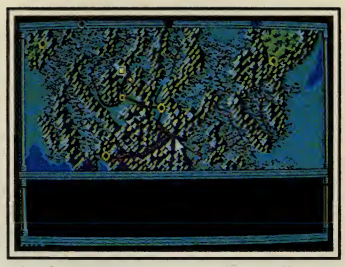
The record is 45 seconds. We think you can beat it.

Roland®

Roland Corp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040 213 685-5141

System Requirements: IBM-PC/XT/AT or compatible, minimum 256k RAM

With Myrtani and the red dragons destroyed, the danger to the Good Armies has passed. You are heroes, and you will be well rewarded.



The dragons have dropped you off near the outpost where you started the game. Enter, and you'll know what it's like to be celebrated heroes.

powers and extra spells.

Similarly, there are three types of mages — those of the White Robes, Red Robes, and Black Robes — each governed by one of Krynn's moons, and the moons have a real effect on the game. And the game introduces the Solamnic Knight as a character class, with three levels of this class as well.

Why all the changes? They were simply dictated by the books from which the setting was taken. The *AD&D* system offers three fully developed worlds in which to adventure: Greyhawk, Forgotten Realms, and Dragonlance. *Pool* and *Curse* were set in the Forgotten Realms, while *Krynn* shifts to a Dragonlance setting. TSR's Dragonlance books are extremely popular fantasy fiction, and Penman says that SSI hopes the use of that setting will draw more players to the computer system because of the connection to the books.

What the changes confirm is SSI's commitment to the *AD&D* universe. By using the established *AD&D* settings as the basis for such fundamental game elements as races and character classes, SSI's designers prove that they are trying to work within the spirit of these settings. Readers of the Dragonlance novels will recognize many characters and themes, and even the tone of knightly heroism is captured by the inclusion of such elements — which Penman attributes to SSI's Dave Shelley — as a series of tests within a former knight's tomb.

The victory celebrations begin, but you have little heart for them. Some in your party are unconscious; others are dead. You can heal the former, but you need advanced clerics to revive the others.

Champions of Krynn *is over. All that remains is to raise from the dead those who can be raised, then save the game and explore as you wish. In the next AD&D game, you'll be able to use the same characters.*

Champions of Krynn plays well. A common story line guides you through the adventure from start to finish, and each location provides something beyond mere fighting to keep you interested. On the second easiest level, the game can be played to completion in about 60-80 hours — it takes much longer, of course, at the highest levels. Best of all is the flavor generated by the different types of knights, mages, and clerics. Putting two parties with different character types through the adventure at the same time, comparing their progress to one another, is a very enjoyable possibility.

SSI's series will, of course, continue. As in all fantasy RPGs, it would be nice to see increased development in the role-playing aspects, but, as Penman explained, "Computers handle combat better than they handle dungeon-mastering." Still, working toward a good computer dungeon master would demonstrate even further how serious SSI is about transferring *AD&D* to the electronic world.

GP

Express Order Software Invites You on a

CALL TO ACTION

Save on these exciting MS-DOS®-based games!

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Play football with a bunch of big, crazy galoots! The first real football simulation.

Reg. 49.95

39.95 25-1307

Out Run

Rev the engine, and burn rubber in the hottest car around!

Reg. 34.95

29.95 25-1317

M1 TANK PLATOON

Command a full platoon of powerful tanks. All the action of armored land combat.

Reg. 64.95

59.95 900-2755

SILPHEED

Defend the United Universe against the evil empire's attacks.

Reg. 34.95

29.95 25-1294

ARKANOID II

Use your mighty weapons to fight "Doh," the evil grid monster.

Reg. 34.95

29.95 25-1324

It's easy to order by phone:

1-800-321-3133

- *Call 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. CST*
- *Most Major Credit Cards Accepted*

Packages include both 3½" and 5¼" diskettes.
MS-DOS/licensed from Microsoft Corp.

EXPRESS ORDER℠

A DIVISION OF TANDY CORPORATION

NEIL RANDALL

Spreadsheets don't need sound. Neither do database managers or word processors. And accessing the Dow Jones information service is a fairly silent event. Personal finance software? What other sounds are necessary besides your groans of dismay?

The IBM PC was invented as an almost soundless and music-less computer. Or at least, its sounds were limited to beeps issuing from a speaker rarely larger than one and a half inches in diameter. Remember, though, that the IBM PC was also initially designed to use a 40-column monochrome screen, and it was incapable of producing graphics. As long as it did OK with text and numbers, users didn't require anything else.

So when the IBM PC became the standard for personal computers, its limitations in graphics, sound, and music became standard as well. Hercules came along to fix some of the graphics bugs, and the Color Graphics Adapter even (to the dismay of many purists) added a whopping four colors. Eventually, though, EGA took over, and more recently VGA has set new standards (in the world of MS-DOS at least) for the clarity and color of images.

But until very recently, there has been no evolution for IBM sound and music. Compared to the early Atari 800s, Commodore 64s, and even Colecovision videogames, PC sound was less than nothing. In 1985 the Amiga established four-channel stereo sound as a game-playing standard, and the Atari ST came stocked with a MIDI interface for use with a growing array of synthesizers. Apple then bowed to the pressure, and the Mac and the IIGS got their own high-quality sound. Even with that competition, the IBM PC beeped along, way behind the pack.

And even if spreadsheets don't need sound, other software does. Desktop video, for example, as well as multimedia presentation software, educational software, and, of course, games.

The full extent of the PC sound and music crisis hit when MS-DOS became the strongest-selling games medium in the personal computer industry. Suddenly, games which in their original versions made innovative use of sound and music were being ported to the PC. The results were almost parodies of the original games. Clearly, something had to be done.

Enter AdLib, Covox, Creative Labs, and the Roland Cor-

poration. All four companies, realizing the need for sound and music on the PC, decided to release expansion boards that plug into your computer to fill the void. Add to the list Access Software, whose RealSound system tries to get something beyond beeps out of the PC's internal speaker. And add, most recently, FTL, whose specific needs demanded an entirely different approach to the problem of PC sound.

As of early 1990, the AdLib Music Synthesizer Card is the de facto standard among sound boards. More games support the AdLib than any other card. There's a reason for this: The AdLib card has been around for over a year, and it's much less expensive than Roland's board.

The AdLib is a half-size card that fits into one of your computer's expansion slots. It has 11 voices (standard FM technology), which means it can play up to 11 instrument sounds simultaneously. Though through FM synthesis it can create sounds as well, its real strength is in music rather than sounds. The card comes packaged with a playback program called Juke Box and a number of pre-synthesized songs to sit back and enjoy.

At the back of the AdLib board is a volume control and a 1/4" (full-size) headphone jack. Included in the package is an adapter for the newer 1/8" ultra-light headphones. You can listen through headphones, or you can use a Y-adapter to run wires from the card to external speakers. Alternatively, you can run the wires to your stereo system for the greatest possible control of your sound.

For about $70 more than the AdLib card itself, you can buy the AdLib Personal Computer Music System, which includes the AdLib card, Juke Box, and two music composition products — Visual Composer and Composition Project #1. Visual Composer lets you draw notes on a screen that looks much like a spreadsheet; you can use six melodic and five percussive voices, or nine full melodic voices. If you buy a MIDI interface, you can input notes via a MIDI-compatible keyboard. Composition Project #1 gives you tutorial-style instruction on writing your own music.

Other Ad Lib products include the Visual Composer/MIDI Supplement (a MIDI sequencer), Instrument Maker (an instrument editor), Music Championship #1 (a music teacher of sorts), Pop-Tunes (a memory-resident playback program), several song albums, and a programmer's manual. All are inexpensive, and all are professionally produced and supported.

Covox has been an innovator in personal computer sound generation and voice recognition products for several years. Most recently, the company has introduced a game and sound enhancement system called the Sound Master, a half-size, plug-in card with a three-voice music chip; eight-bit digitized speech and sound; digital joystick ports (Atari and Commodore type, not the typical PC analog joysticks); and a pair of small (2-1/4") speakers for use with the system.

An increasing number of games are supporting the Covox Sound Master, including *Sim City*, *Wind Walker*, *ABC Monday Night Football*, *Harpoon*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and a number of others. In total, there are more than 126 different developers representing 72 major publishers who are supporting the Sound Master in new or enhanced versions of their products.

Covox also offers several other sound, music, and voice systems for the PC, some of which operate in the entertainment environment. The Speech Thing is an eight-bit sound converter that attaches through the parallel printer port. It converts digitized or synthesized speech and sound from a software program's sound file. The system includes the plug-in cartridge, manual, and an amplifier/speaker with volume control and auxiliary headphone jack. Among the software programs are a talking calculator, a talking blackjack game, a music sampler keyboard, and several other items that show off the features of The Speech Thing.

In addition, Covox sells the Voice Master Key System, a voice recognition system that's also a speech and sound development system. This hardware and software package includes a plug-in circuit card, a microphone headset, software, and manual. The system enables you, among other things, to create voice-activated macros in such programs as *Lotus 1-2-3*, *WordPerfect*, *Dbase III+*, and other business programs. The entire package offers a lot of innovative approaches to voice recognition usage and, while not aimed primarily at the PC game player, is a fascinating approach to voice-activated computing.

In every element of its design, the Sound Blaster attempts to become *the* card for the PC game player.

Not only does this 3/4-length board offer 12-voice stereo sound with C/MS compatibility, it also offers all 11 FM voices found on the monophonic AdLib board. In other words, it is fully compatible with both the Game Blaster (also from Creative Labs) and the AdLib. This means buyers of the Sound Blaster will have music and sound with a wealth of existing games while they wait for developers to take advantage of the Sound Blaster's own features.

And to prevent PC game players from having to buy a joystick card, the Sound Blaster has built in one. Just one, mind you, but most PCs have only one in operation at any given time. If you already own a joystick card, you'll either have to remove it or disable the one on the Sound Blaster, but its inclusion is welcome nonetheless. The joystick port doubles as a MIDI interface, so with the interface in place, you need only a MIDI connector box and cables (available from Creative Labs) to complete the connection to a MIDI-compatible keyboard. The MIDI connector box, by the way, includes its own joystick port as well.

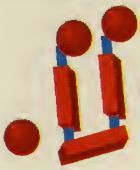
The Sound Blaster also includes a four-watts-per-channel amplifier, a volume control, a 1/8" stereo headphone jack, and a Y-adapter (with 3-foot cables) for connection to external speakers. Plug the cables into your speakers, and you have good, adjustable sound.

The Sound Blaster's final voice is reserved for digitized sound. Using a microphone (not supplied), you can input human voices and sounds. For game developers, this means having the ability to incorporate real speech into their programs.

The Sound Blaster comes packaged with software demonstrating its capabilities. With Talking Parrot, you can speak into a microphone and watch the bird move its beak as it outputs your voice back to you. You can use your PC's keyboard to create music using various instrument sounds with C/MS Intelligent Organ. The VoxKit, as its name suggests, lets you use a microphone to record and playback (at various sampling frequencies) voices and sounds. VoxKit also compresses the digitized files into acceptable sizes on your disk.

Pop-Up Music is a memory-resident program that lets you play music as you work on your spreadsheet (it needs 112K minimum memory). Finally, Sing-Along II allows you to synchronize music with the lyrics crossing the screen. It's for those people who crowd around their PCs instead of their pianos at Christmas. The package, in fact, contains a disk of Christmas songs.

Other available products include C/MS Presenter, with which you create musically enhanced presentations by synchronizing graphics with C/MS-created sound, and the C/MS Music Composer, which combines a text-based system for creating music with a compiler for creating full 12-voice arrangements.



THE ROLAND LAPC-I SOUND CARD

The LAPC-I is the most expensive card of the four. It also, without question, offers the best music capabilities. A quick listen to the score from *the Manhole, Lakers Versus Celtics, or King's Quest IV* immediately bears out this claim.

The LAPC-I is equivalent in function and quality to Roland's better-known MT-32 card. Fully MIDI-compatible, it contains a built-in MIDI interface. With Roland's MIDI connector box, you can hook the LAPC-I to a MIDI synthesizer (a line of which Roland itself manufactures), and start your own studio.

But you don't need the synthesizer for playing games. The LAPC-I sounds superb all on its own. It comes with a 1/8" headphone jack, the MIDI interface, and two standard RCA jacks with which you hook up the LAPC-I to the auxiliary jacks of your stereo. Then you just need to turn on your stereo and turn up the volume to enjoy it.

Most of the LAPC-I's 24-page manual is concerned with the peculiarities of MIDI implementation. Listed on four pages, however, are the 40 rhythm assignments possible on the LAPC-I (everything from hand clapping through cowbells, tambourines, and congas), the more than 30 built-in sound effects (including laughter, screams, laser guns, machine guns, bubbles, wind, and applause), and the 128 instrument sounds (ranging from three varieties of acoustic piano through honkey-tonk piano, accordion, harpsichord, chorale, oboe, acoustic and electric guitar, horns, strings, and so on).

The LAPC-I's richness stems from the fact that up to 32 voices can play simultaneously (hence the name MT-32: Multi-Timbral 32-voice). Actually, the LAPC-I plays eight parts simultaneously, with each part consisting potentially of eight partials. In addition, it can play the rhythm part, which includes sound effects.

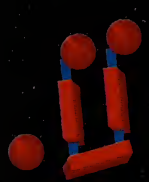
For those who design game soundtracks, these things matter. For those of us playing the games, only the sound matters. And with the LAPC-I, the sound is of a very high quality. Melodies are lush, instrument sounds are rich and deep, and the whole effect is as far removed as imaginable from the internal PC speaker. This card is expensive, but the sound quality is there.

THE DUNGEON MASTER SOUND ADAPTER: FTL DOES IT THEIR WAY

If you're a software publisher, building support for sound boards into your software is a good idea. People who have the boards will automatically enjoy the game more than they would otherwise. That much is obvious.

But what happens if your game depends on sound? At this point in the PC's life, you certainly can't assume that all your potential customers will have the AdLib, Sound Blaster, Sound Master, or LAPC-I cards in their machines.

FTL Games decided to tackle the issue head on. *Dungeon Master*, their upcoming PC release, was a big hit on the Atari ST and the Commodore Amiga because of its superb graphics and its bone-chilling sound. If *Dungeon Master* were



GET WITH THE PROGRAM!

Did you ever find yourself sitting in front of your television set shouting out the answers to the questions on your favorite TV game show?

You answer first but nobody hears you. Or so you thought.

GameTek was listening! And now, you can be part of the action ...practically right in the studio! GameTek has captured all of the excitement of the original programs on computer software. Each program was designed in full cooperation with the producers of each show to ensure that every game is packed with all the thrills and supense of the original program!

Tune in to GameTek software, and get with the program!

GameTek™

2999 NE 191st Street • North Miami Beach • Florida 33180 • (305) 935-3995 • Fax (305) 932-8651

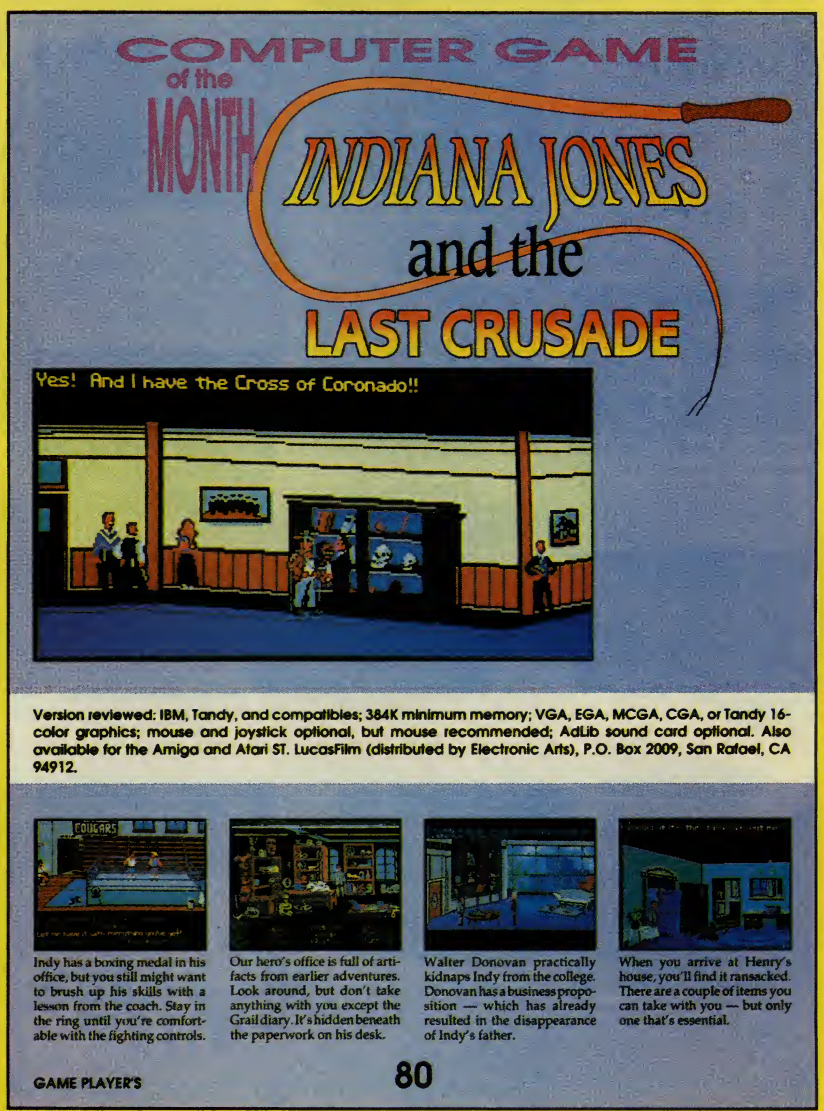
©1990 GameTek/IJE, Inc. GameTek is a Trademark of IJE, Inc. All rights reserved. WHEEL OF FORTUNE FAMILY EDITION is based on the television program produced by Merv Griffin Enterprises, a Unit of Columbia Pictures Entertainment, Inc. © ℗1990 Califon Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. JEOPARDY! 25th ANNIVERSARY EDITION is based on the television program produced by Merv Griffin Enterprises, a Unit of Columbia Pictures Entertainment, Inc © ℗1990, Jeopardy Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Nintendo and Nintendo Entertainment System are trademarks of Nintendo of America Inc. Hollywood Squares™ ©1986,1988 Century Towers Productions. All rights reserved. Super Password™ ©1988 The Password Co. All rights reserved. The Price is Right™ ©1988 Price Productions Inc. All rights reserved. Press Your Luck™ ©1988 The William Carruthers Company. All rights reserved.

THE GAME Player's™

MAGAZINE FOR *EVERY* VIDEO OR COMPUTER GAME PLAYER!

- Gaming news from around the world — the latest Japanese crazes, hi-tech joysticks, previews of next-generation 16-bit game machines.
- The best writers and columnists in the business.
- Reviews of the latest hit games for Nintendo®, Sega, Atari, PC, Commodore 64, Amiga, and Macintosh — even arcade hits.
- In-depth features — games thoroughly examined with page after page of full-color maps, strategy hints and tips, and screen shots.
- The Hot 100 — mini-reviews of 100 of the most popular games.
- The best free public domain games, and how to get them.
- And much, much more!

Each issue is filled with color and packed with solid information, hundreds of hints and tips, game descriptions, even maps and complete solutions to complicated games!



Version reviewed: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles; 384K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, MCGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; mouse and joystick optional, but mouse recommended; AdLib sound card optional. Also available for the Amiga and Atari ST. LucasFilm (distributed by Electronic Arts), P.O. Box 2009, San Rafael, CA 94912.

Indy has a boxing medal in his office, but you still might want to brush up his skills with a lesson from the coach. Stay in the ring until you're comfortable with the fighting controls.

Our hero's office is full of artifacts from earlier adventures. Look around, but don't take anything with you except the Grail diary. It's hidden beneath the paperwork on his desk.

Walter Donovan practically kidnaps Indy from the college. Donovan has a business proposition — which has already resulted in the disappearance of Indy's father.

When you arrive at Henry's house, you'll find it ransacked. There are a couple of items you can take with you — but only one that's essential.

Omnitrend's *Universe 3* is notable for three reasons. First, it's pretty good science fiction. Second, it uses a playable role-playing system. Third, it's substantially different from its two predecessors, *Universe* and *Universe II*.

Universe was Omnitrend's first product, and it became a sci-fi classic. It was a strategy game (always welcomed by sci-fi buffs) in which you mined for ore and traded goods while searching for a hyperspace booster, a strange and valuable alien artifact.

Not a bad concept for a sci-fi game. But the problem, as many found out, was that *Universe* wasn't very interesting, graphically or otherwise. As one reviewer put it, *Universe* could have been named *Visicalc in Space*.

Universe II dealt with some of these issues, but it too was a highly complex strategy game. Its advertising boasted that it came with a 115-page manual. Many game players don't want to read *ten* pages, let alone more than a hundred. Nevertheless, Omnitrend's audience continued to expand.

Now comes *Universe 3*, and it's a welcome change from the others. Cone is the lengthy manual. The instructions are 15 pages long, and only eight of these are devoted to commands and game play. Furthermore, *Universe 3* is now very graphics oriented. Your character and your position are seen from an attractive overhead view, and you move from place to place using a mouse or the cursor keys.

The game's premise is also interesting. Once a spy for the Federated Worlds, you have now been assigned to travel to the HomeCluster, where your culture originated. All contact with the HomeCluster has been lost, and this has led to increasing strain — and even war — within your Local Group. Your job, basically, is to find out what gives.

Along the way, you're certain to run into complications. One is a suspected (and quickly proven) traitor on your ship. Another is the loss of an important diplomatic member of your expedition. Then, when you find yourself in a deserted city, you lose your mission orders and practically everything else you carry.

But you are nothing if not re-

PC PLAYERS

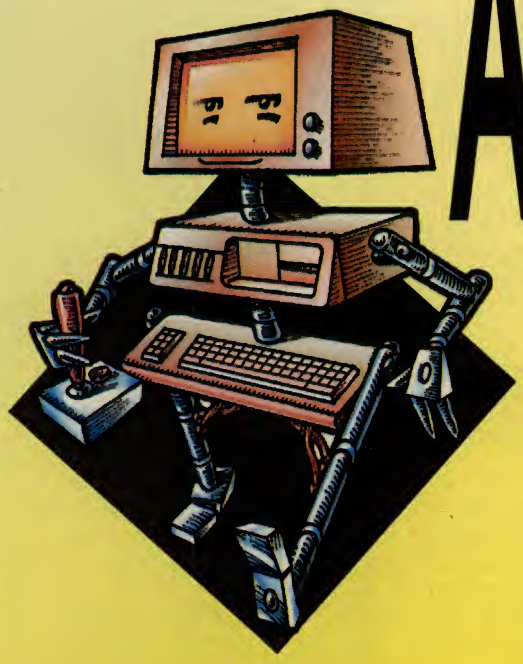
SPACE VETS AND RACING 'VETTES

Neil Randall

1. In *Universe 3*, you begin the expedition in your captain's quarters. At the upper right is a *wall safe* you should open.
2. By zooming in on the safe, you can open it and remove the contents. Be sure to read the personal note.
3. In the Hibernation Center, your four comrades wait for their awakening. One will die, but there's nothing you can do about it.
4. Gobi is the bad guy of the party. Knowing that won't help you much, though. He'll cause trouble anyway.

DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE OF THE HOTTEST NEW MAGAZINE IN VIDEO AND COMPUTER GAMES!

AND FOR PC GAME PLAYER'S: THE PC STRATEGY AND BUYER'S GUIDES!



- All the new games reviewed by experts!
- Pages and pages bursting with full-color screen shots!
- All the newest, hottest games for IBM PC's and compatibles!
- Hundreds of insider tips, techniques, and special hints!
- Learn how to improve your scores!

GAME PLAYER'S PC GUIDES sell to the millions IBM-PC owners. Experience the games firsthand. See the important screens in full color, learn about the characters, the different levels, how the game plays. Then, when you're ready to buy your next game — you'll know what's hot and what's not!

THE GAME PLAYER'S COMBO SUBSCRIPTION—Two Great Magazines at a super-saver rate of 46% off!

REVIEWS

SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT

Arian R. Levitan

If you've dreamed of writing the ultimate arcade game, but you don't want to spend months learning how to program a computer, help has arrived. *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit* allows you to design your own action games without writing a line of code — or even touching a keyboard.

Shoot 'Em Up consists of several powerful mouse-driven editors that let you control virtually every aspect of a typical arcade-style game. The Sprite Editor, for instance, allows you to create and modify your own heroes, nasties, projectiles, and explosions. Then, using the Object Editor, you can add animation by telling the program to quickly flip through a series of sprites.

The Background Editor lets you create a battlefield for your melee. The Level Editor lets you determine which backgrounds should be associated with each level of the game. Each level's backdrop can be fixed, scrolled continuously, or scrolled by the movement of your hero.

With *Shoot 'Em Up*'s Sound Editor, you can assign sounds to objects. You can use the sounds supplied with the three sample games, or add any digitized sound stored in IFF file format.

The Attack Wave Editor determines which enemies will appear on each level and the paths they will follow. If you feel like battling the Mongol hordes, large formations of individual foes can be combined to attack en masse.

The Player Limitations Editor lets you control the variables that determine the overall playability of the game. It's also a godsend for those with less than lightning-quick reflexes. Heroes can be granted additional speed, up to ten lives, and more firepower.

A Test Game option lets you try your creation without exiting the editors. There's a normal mode and a cheat mode that gives you unlimited lives.

When you're done, you can share stand-alone versions of the game with your friends. *Shoot 'Em Up* even lets you use any 32-color, 320 x 200-pixel picture as a title screen.

Although building a polished, playable arcade game won't take months, don't expect to knock off a masterpiece in a few hours. Creating an original game that will stand the test of repeated play may take days or weeks.

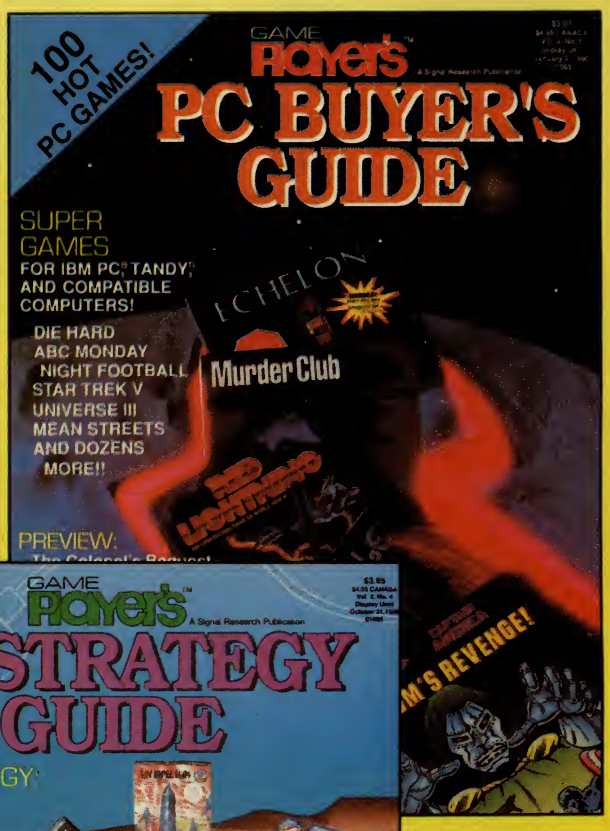
Typical of the many editor screens in *Shoot 'Em Up* is the Sprite Editor, which allows you to design your own characters.

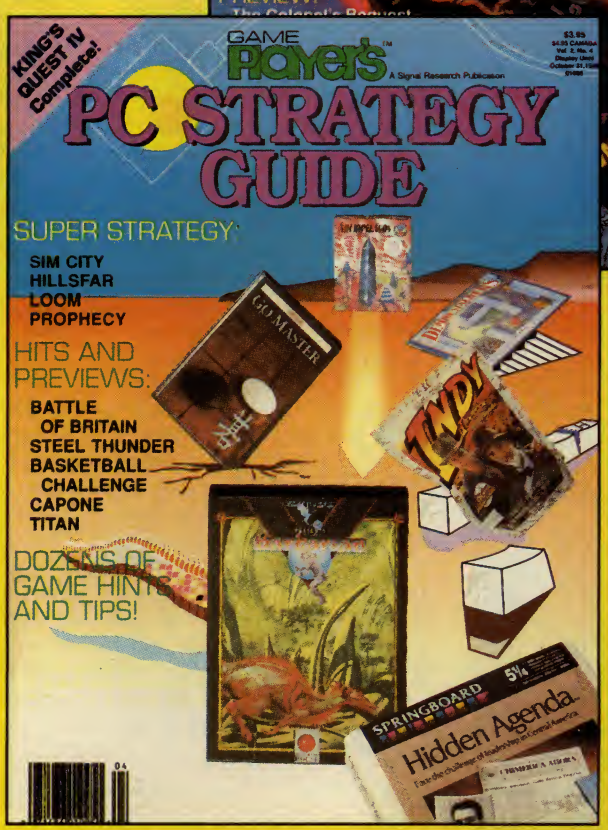
Psychobloid is one of the three sample games included with the package.

By flipping through a series of sprite shapes with the Object Editor, you can create animated sequences.

GP

GAME PLAYER'S 100





Check the COMBO Subscription box and you get BOTH Game Player's Magazines at a spectacular savings off the regular prices!

FILL OUT AND MAIL THE SUBSCRIPTION CARD TODAY!

A SIGNAL RESEARCH, INC. PUBLICATION, NOT AFFILIATED WITH NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

NINTENDO IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

to be a success in its PC version, it would need some kind of sound-making device. But it was obviously impractical to include an AdLib or Sound Blaster card with every game. Something new had to be developed.

The result: the *Dungeon Master* Sound Adapter, included at no extra charge with every game of *Dungeon Master*. According to Russ Boelhauf of FTL, the "no extra charge" is the result of a lot of running around making sure that it really wouldn't force up the price of the game. Price, too, has something to do with a game's overall market success.

FTL's Sound Adapter is about the same size as one end of your printer cable. In fact, the adapter fits onto the parallel port on your computer. At one side is a jack that lets you run a cable (included) to an external speaker/amplifier combination, such as your stereo. For an inexpensive system, for example, you can hook the Sound Adapter to an Archer mini-amplifier/speaker, available for about $10 at electronics stores.

At the other end of the adapter is a very interesting feature: a joystick port that lets you use a run-of-the-mill, Atari-style joystick, rather than the more expensive PC-style controllers. *Dungeon Master* itself will fully support this joystick, although you can use a mouse or PC joystick as well.

Boelhauf believes that the Sound Adapter has a chance of becoming a real standard in the PC game world. First, it's extremely inexpensive (i.e. free). Second, it supports the less expensive joystick. Third, as FTL's research demonstrated, "a tremendous percentage of PC owners refuse to open their computers" to install cards, an effort required by purchasers of AdLib, Sound Blaster, Sound Master, and LAPC-I.

The Sound Adapter essentially plays digitizations. The clanking chains, grunts, groans, and combat sounds that dominated *Dungeon Master* on the ST and the Amiga are almost identical through even the Archer mini-amp in the PC version, and digitized music will be added as well. Although not the world's most sophisticated digitizer, designers of sound for the Sound Adapter can vary sampling rates, boost fidelity, and make it perform other useful functions.

Dungeon Master, with the Sound Adapter included in every package, is due out by the end of the first quarter of 1990.

SO WHO NEEDS SOUND AND MUSIC ANYWAY?

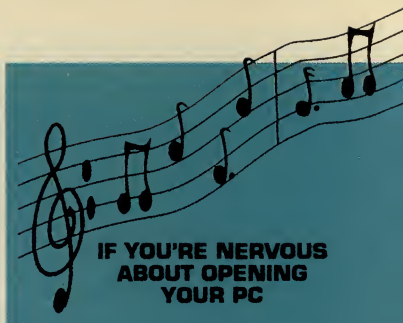
Games for PCs once looked bad, sounded bad, and even played bad. Now they look good — at times even great — and they play much more smoothly. In many cases, however, they still sound terrible.

The trend in the visual media is toward much better sound: Stereo televisions and high-fidelity and Super-VHS VCRs support much better sound than was once available. In computers, the Commodore 64 introduced real sound and music to gamers many years ago, and the Amiga continues to blow people away with its full stereo sound.

Nintendo sound is similar to Commodore 64 sound, and the stereo music on the NEC TurboGrafx-16 with its optional compact-disc player is the best game sound available yet. Add to this list the importance of sound in video arcades, and you understand how far behind the PC really is.

If games are ever to simulate reality, as many of them strive to do, they must incorporate more senses than just sight. Touch and feel are important, as anyone knows who compares playing a flight simulator to flying a real airplane. And sound is absolutely vital — television has it, movies have it, and real life has it. Just try turning down the sound on the next horror movie you watch, and see what you have left.

GP



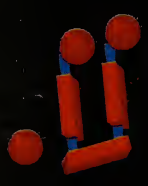
IF YOU'RE NERVOUS ABOUT OPENING YOUR PC

For most non-technical PC owners, opening a computer is a nerve-wracking — and often warranty-voiding — experience. After all, you're warned against spilling coffee on the keyboard, putting anything magnetic near your disk drives, keeping the room too warm, and any number of other potentially destructive acts. Small wonder, then, that people hesitate to open the PC's box.

Installing a sound card, however, is remarkably easy. Just remember the two immutable rules about opening your computer: First, *always unplug the power cord before starting*. And second, *if you drop a screw or any other metallic device inside the box, don't even consider plugging the machine in before you get it out*. That's it. The rest is common sense.

Depending on how and where you purchased your computer, you may need to have a computer technician carry out any under-the-hood plug-in card installation. You should know or find out if that's the case with your computer *before* you start to install a sound card so that you don't unknowingly void a warranty. But, for most PC game players, the job can be handled with the guidelines provided by the sound card manufacturers.

All sound and music cards come with instructions for their installation. If you follow them, you're usually home free. Unplug all the cables that lead to your machine, then remove the screws that hold the box on. Remove the box-top (it should come off quite easily), and slip the card in an available slot. Push it in firmly after you make sure that you've got it lined up correctly. Then put the holding screw in place and close the machine. Put the power cord back in, start things up, and you've got music and sound at your fingertips.

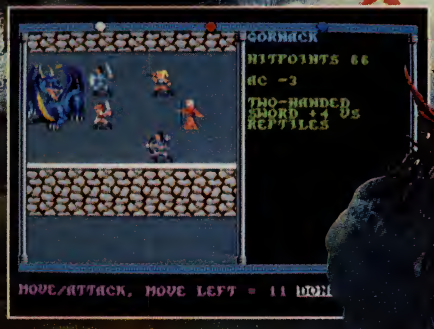


Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®
COMPUTER PRODUCT

CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN

The first fantasy role-playing epic set in the AD&D® DRAGONLANCE® game world!

CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN improves on the award-winning game system used in SSI's mega-hits *POOL OF RADIANCE* and *CURSE OF THE AZURE BONDS*. For the first time ever on your computer, you'll enjoy fantasy role-playing adventure in the legendary AD&D® game world of Krynn! Your quest: Defeat a vile plot by the forces of evil to establish the Dark Queen, Takhisis, as undisputed ruler of Krynn!



IBM DISPLAY

AVAILABLE FOR:
IBM & C-64/128.
APPLE II & AMIGA.

▶**FREE POSTER!**
Inside every box.

▶**CLUEBOOK!**
Coming soon to a dealer near you.

To order: visit your retailer or call: 1-800-245-4525 to charge on VISA or MasterCard. To receive SSI's complete product catalog, send $1.00 to: SSI, 675 Almanor Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.

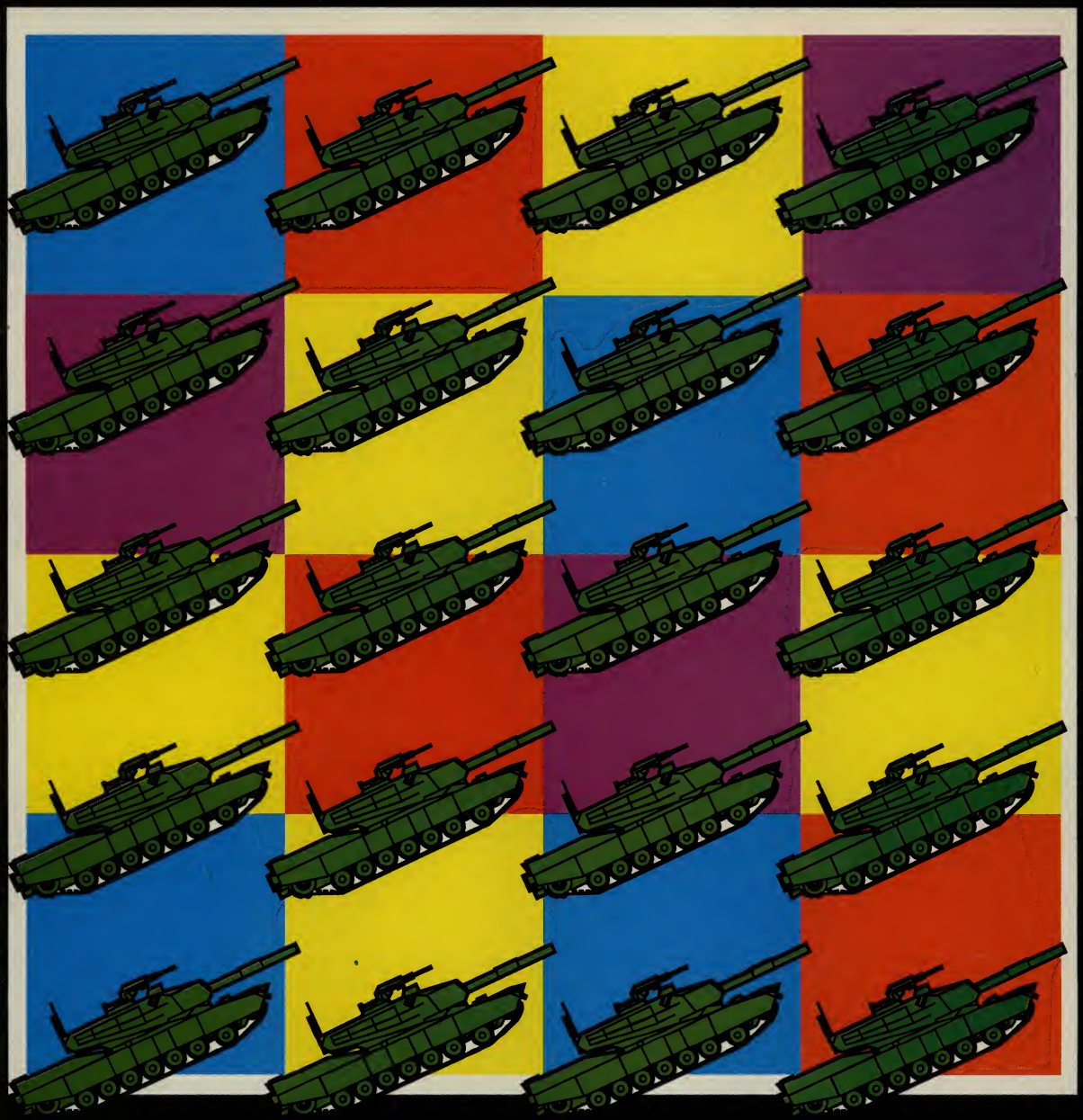
TSR, Inc.

DragonLance®

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, AD&D, DRAGONLANCE, and the TSR logo are trademarks owned by and used under license from TSR, Inc. ©1990 TSR, Inc. ©1990 Strategic Simulations, Inc. All rights reserved.

SSI™

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.®



TANKS A LOT!

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

If 1988 seemed to be dominated by flight simulators, 1989 was surely the Year of the Tank. In what amounted to a veritable arms race, major software companies vied with each other to capture the attention, loyalty, and dollars of a growing audience of desktop Pattons — ordinarily quiet, normal folks who could not resist the thrill of careening over a scrolling 3-D landscape at the controls of a 55-ton armored monster.

Reasons for the popularity of tank simulators aren't hard to fathom. The basic premise for all computer simulations, after all, is that they allow players to experience an activity that is either too expensive or too dangerous to undertake in real life. A good tank simulator should provide some sense of the power, weight, and crushing momentum of the real

vehicle. In addition, the overall program should do the most vivid job possible of re-creating the combat environment in which armored vehicles must operate.

The best of 1989's tank simulators came impressively close to this ideal *gestalt* of realism while still being enormously *fun* to play with. Based on many hours of game reviewing, here is an overview of a suddenly crowded genre.

The Impact of the Abrams

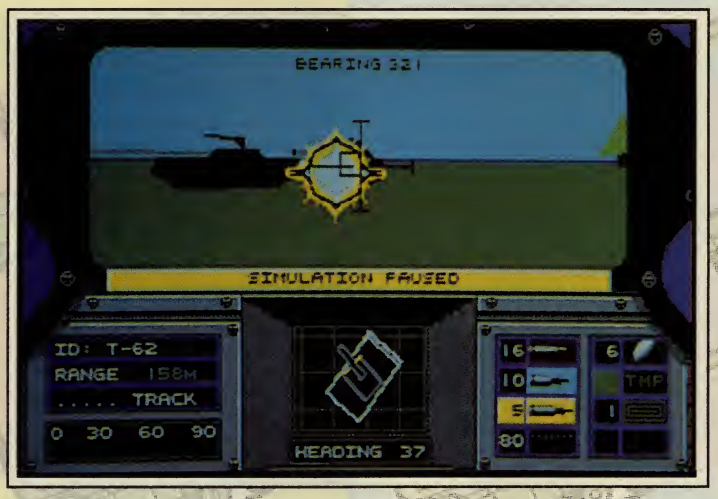
One thing is immediately apparent when one scans the list of games: The M1 Abrams has a certain cachet as the hottest MBT (Main Battle Tank) in the world of gaming. In fact, if one were to judge from this tank's prestige among programmers, one would never know that the Abrams was once — not so long ago either — a highly controversial vehicle.

Critics pointed to its cost (astronomical and many times higher than that of the Warsaw Pact tanks it would oppose in time of war); the vulnerability of its complex high-tech systems under combat conditions; and the fact that its gas turbine engine guzzled fuel like a Formula One racer. Since the Abrams, thankfully, has never been tested in combat, these points remain moot. As a simulation, though, the tank is a resounding success, having been the inspiration of several first-rate programs.

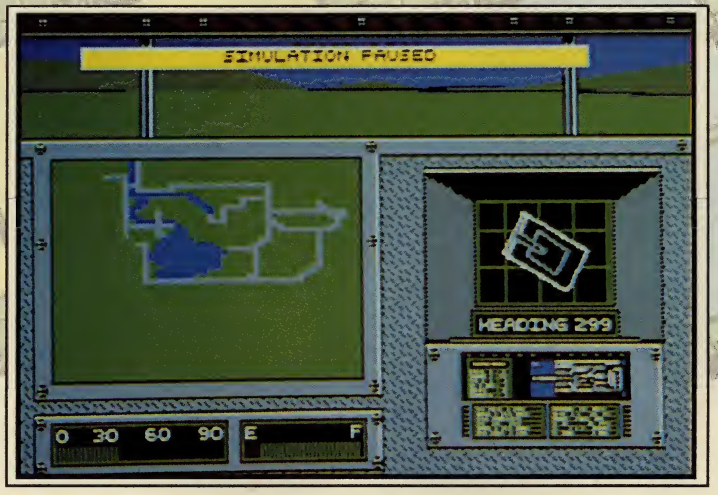
The first of these games to hit the market was *Abrams Battle Tank* by Dynamix. This program does an outstanding job of capturing the sensations of driving in a powerful vehicle at full throttle over an undulating landscape. It's quite exhilarating to poke your head out of the turret and simply go joyriding over the simulated German countryside.

Combat missions in *Abrams Battle Tank* are well designed, and the battle action is intense. The game's 3-D

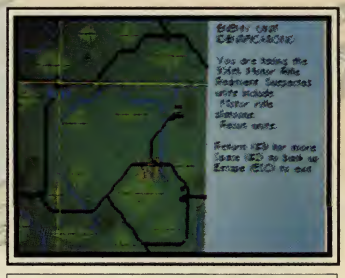
Abrams Battle Tank *was the first in a spate of major tank simulations that reached the market in 1989.*



Abrams *featured smooth 3-D graphics and intense battle action within a wide variety of scenarios.*



Some players, however, felt that controlling the Abrams tank, navigating it, and fighting a battle — all simultaneously — was an input overload.



M1 Tank Platoon *strove to re-create the entire battlefield environment and integrated small-units tactics into the simulation.*

graphics are good, if not quite as good as those found in some later games. More thought could have been given to the matter of controlling the vehicle, however. At times the player is required to perform, more or less simultaneously, actions that the U.S. Army trains four men to handle as a team.

While some players may relish that challenge, it does keep you so busy that in some scenarios you really don't have enough time to savor the action and graphics.

Perhaps the most elaborate Abrams-based simulation yet marketed is *M1 Tank Platoon* from MicroProse. It's hard to do justice to the depth and wealth of detail in this game in this space. Suffice it to say that *Tank Platoon* begins where most tank simulations start to taper off.

It lets you command not just a single vehicle, but a platoon of four vehicles and 16 men — each soldier with his own characteristics and skills. The small-unit tactical program, in turn, is framed by a superbly rounded simulation of the total battlefield environment.

Millions of terrain, weather, and enemy forces variables make for virtually limitless playability once the player has mastered the basic system. Admittedly, mastery is no small task. There are more than 100 commands available, and the learning curve is very steep. Thankfully, however, MicroProse has provided excellent documentation. You can begin playing on an elementary level in less than an hour, then gradually add more and more refinements as you gain experience.

Some of those refinements include managing supporting formations of Bradley Fighting Vehicles; mastering the fine points of fighting in formation; calling down artillery fire from off-the-map batteries; laying smoke; or directing air support. Perhaps the most elegant aspect of this massive simulation is the way in which you can take hands-on control of as much (or as little) of the fighting as you want. You can even put the whole platoon under orders, then assume a God-like point of view and watch the whole battle develop before your eyes.

Another operational-scale simulation which concentrates on the Abrams is Spectrum Holobyte's *Tank*. This game features some of the most realistic rolling terrain to be found anywhere, and what some will find an easier and more logical control layout than in the MicroProse program. Certainly shell explosions and battle damage are more realistic than their over-stylized equivalents in *Tank Platoon*.

And in *Tank*, you can command at the company, platoon, or individual vehicle level, controlling up to 16 tanks at a time. Close range firefights are vividly modeled in *Tank* with up to 40 vehicles on the field simultaneously.

The topographical maps needed for planning strategy are more convincing in the MicroProse game, however, as are the machine gun tracers (a minor point, but crucial to connoisseurs of this genre). And the *Tank* designers' strict insistence that each mission take place in realtime means that some battles seem to take forever before they get cracking.

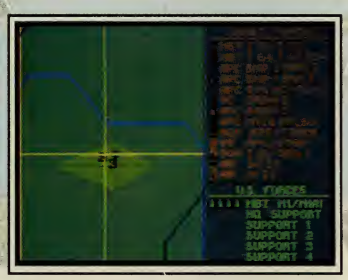
While the consumer may be swayed one way or the other by such details, the basic fact is that both *M1 Tank Platoon* and *Tank* are meticulously designed, detail-rich simulations, complete with thorough, clearly organized documentation. Both deliver the goods, and both may be regarded as state-of-the-art tank simulations. No one investing in either game is likely to be disappointed.

The Glory of Battle

Superb, near-cinematic graphics and furious eat-hot-lead battles are the strong points of Accolade's *Steel Thunder*. This is a clean, sweet, eminently

Tank Platoon's *numerous points of view allowed you to watch the battle unfold as if it were a war movie.*

Explosion and damage effects were quite stylized in the MicroProse game.



You can fight an entire battle from the map in Tank Platoon, *zooming in so close that you can see individual shells flying through the air.*

LOST DUTCHMAN MINE™

Available for Amiga, Atari ST, IBM & Tandy

Journey to the Old West in search of the fabled LOST DUTCHMAN MINE!

Enter the town of Goldfield to buy food and supplies. Play poker in the saloon, read the local news, or visit the bank, jail, livery, doctor or assay office.

Out in the desert, you can fish in the river, pan for gold, and explore over 100 abandoned mines and caves. Freezing nights, scorching days, rattlesnakes, bandits and renegade Indians are a constant threat. Features digitized sound, fabulous graphics and animated sprites.

Available for: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM CGA/EGA/MCGA & Tandy. Suggested Retail: $49.95.

Magnetic Images™

Distributed by
INNERPRISE Software, Inc.
128 Cockeysville Rd • Hunt Valley, MD 21030 • (301) 785-2266

playable simulation that lets you take control (rather quickly, thanks to the keyboard overlays) of four different vehicles: the Abrams (of course), the M-60, the up-gunned mark of the Patton, and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

The Bradley is even more controversial than the Abrams used to be. Its armor is thin and its antitank capability limited. Still, it moves like a bat out of hell and its 25mm cannon can tear up soft or lightly armored vehicles — including helicopters — as though they were made out of balsa wood.

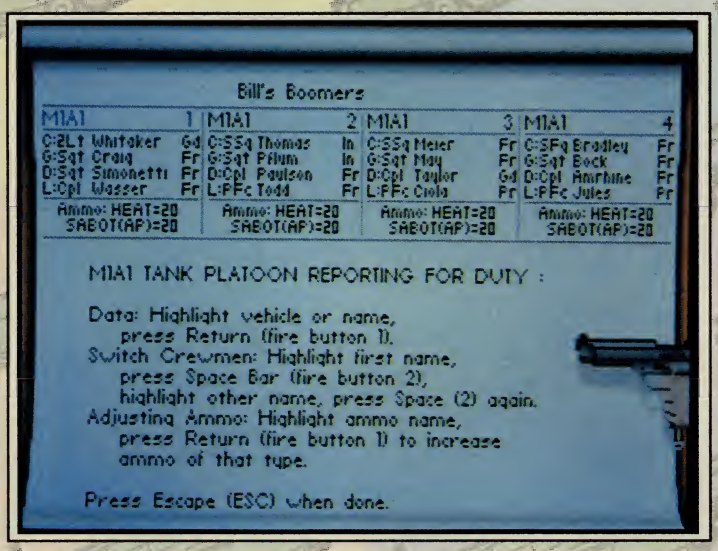
In fact, some of the most action-packed scenarios included in *Steel Thunder* involve the Bradley. Maybe it's the satisfying "pom-pom" soundeffect of the automatic cannon when you're shooting up Eastern bloc truck convoys. Or maybe it's the beautiful muzzle-blast and shell-strike effects. Or maybe it's the fact that you have hundreds of rounds (not just the paltry 40 or so you can carry in a battle tank), so you can really hose down anything that moves.

One thing all of these games have in common: Enemy tanks that are programmed to behave as though intelligent crews were controlling them. Rather than simply coming at you in mindless arcade-style waves, these vehicles dodge and weave, go hull-down at long range, and make skilled use of the terrain to sneak up on you. Indeed, in the better simulations, the enemy seems just as anxious to survive as you are — and his marksmanship can be deadly.

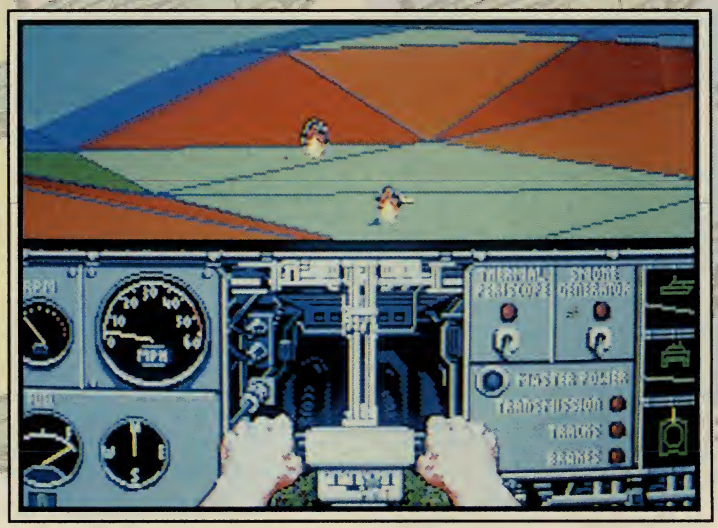
Arcade Action

To the casual software browser, *Heavy Metal* by Access looks as though it belongs in the same category as the games listed above. It does not, even though it, too, lets you play with the Abrams. It also lets you control a self-propelled antiaircraft system called ADATS, and a somewhat silly "fast attack vehicle" that looks like a dune buggy and drives as

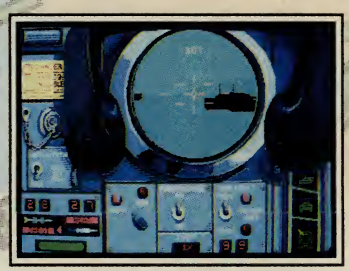
All of these simulations include a training scenario (usually non-lethal). Most players will want to start here.



In its campaign mode, Tank Platoon *lets you promote, decorate, or reassign any of the 16 men in your platoon.*



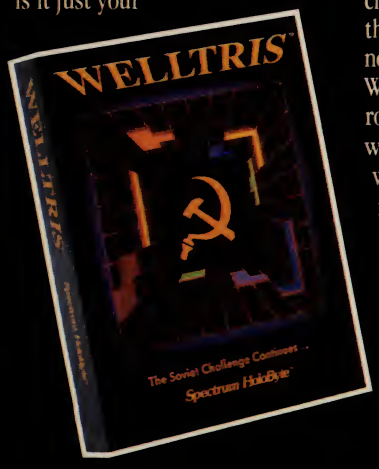
Spectrum Holobyte's Tank *lets you maneuver across a realistic three-dimensional terrain.*



All the Abrams games have roughly similar instrument layouts. Playing one simulation makes it easier to play the others.

ANOTHER SOVIET CHALLENGE OF NEW DIMENSIONS - WELLTRIS

Step into another dimension! Is this pit of falling WELLTRIS™ pieces really drawing you down into its very depths or is it just your imagination? In this latest Soviet mind teaser Alexey Pajitnov, the designer of the award-winning TETRIS™ challenge, transports us into the next dimension. There's a new angle at every turn. WELLTRIS pieces can be rotated within each wall, as well as around the four outer walls while falling deeper into the pit. With three difficulty levels containing five speeds each, few will be able to master the challenge. There is no escape—if TETRIS didn't get you, WELLTRIS will!



Spectrum HoloByte™

A Division of SPHERE, INC.
2061 Challenger Drive Alameda, CA 94501 (415) 522-0107

WARNING: Publisher cannot be held responsible for addictive tendencies developing in WELLTRIS players.

Available on IBM, Macintosh, and Amiga.

Copyright© 1989 Doka. All rights Reserved. Licensed to Bullet-Proof Software. Adaptation and modification made by SPHERE, Inc. by permission of BPS. Original concept and design by Alexey Pajitnov. TETRIS is a trademark of AcademySoft-ELORG. WELLTRIS is a trademark of Bullet-Proof Software. Spectrum HoloByte is a trademark of SPHERE, Inc. Other products are trademarks of their respective holders.

though it had somehow wandered over from the family Nintendo set.

Much is made, on the box and in the manual, of *Heavy Metal*'s "strategy" elements, but aside from the initial placement of your units and deciding when to resupply them, there aren't any. You can't do anything with terrain or outflank a vulnerable enemy formation. In fact, in order to win, you have to leave the strategic map and actually take over the guns with each of your units. That's rather like expecting General Patton to plan a battle, then personally go to the front and man a bazooka.

What *Heavy Metal* really is, then, is a gussied-up arcade game. And if pure shoot-and-scoot action is what you crave, you could do a lot worse. The graphics are excellent and the arcade blasts can be loads of fun, *if* you're in the right mood for it. Just don't take this program home expecting to have your generalship tested.

And Now for Something Completely Different

Futuristic armored warfare is represented in two highly regarded games: *Mechwarrior* (by Activision) and *Omega* (by Origin Software). The former game takes its look and story line from the hugely popular *BattleTech* series of role-playing games. It features humanoid mechanized warriors weighing 70 tons, encased in armor, and packing a vicious assortment of lasers, missiles, and cannons.

Learning to control and navigate these behemoths takes some doing, but once you've got the hang of it, the battles are great fun. You'll have to practice sharp tactics to stay alive, including knowing when to use your jump-jets to leap across terrain obstacles or enemy mechs.

Omega is truly unique. Highly specialized, the emphasis of this simulation is not so much on actual combat as it is on using artificial intelligence techniques to design deadlier and more efficient tanks than your human or computer opponents. *Omega* has a fanatically loyal following — competitions and conventions are held regularly all over the country which allow its devotees to swap arcane programming information.

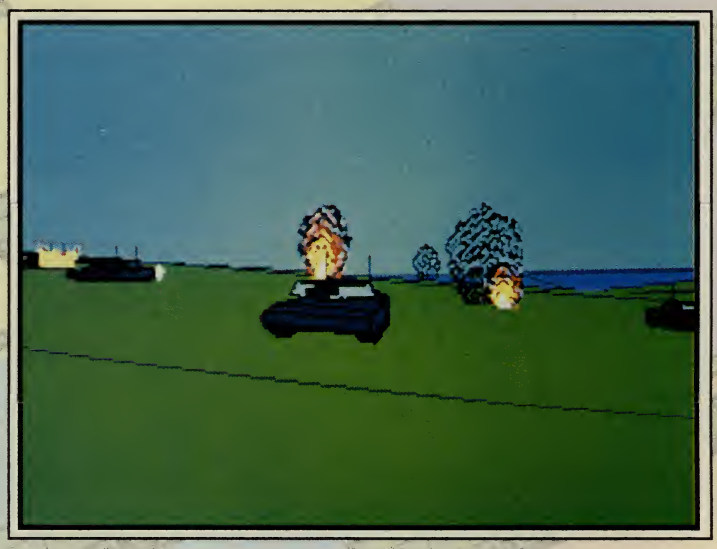
Be aware, though, that *Omega*'s documentation presumes a fairly high level of computer expertise, is confusingly organized, and bristles with buzzwords and jargon. If you're an experienced hacker and know what these people are talking about, by all means go for it. But if you're timid about using your computer for anything other than word processing and occasional spreadsheets, you may find the whole thing utterly impenetrable.

Scene Stealers

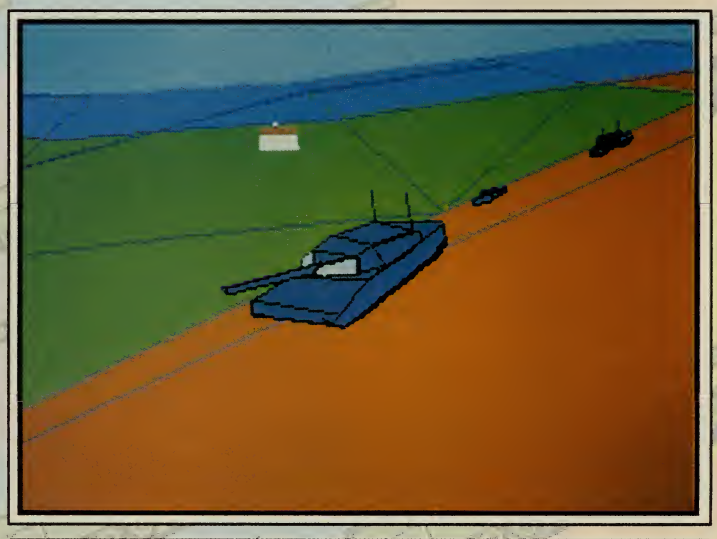
Beyond the tank simulations, per se, comes a whole tier of games in which armored units and armored tactics play a central role. Some of the more impressive ones on the market are *Fire Brigade* from Panther Games, a superb re-creation of the savage battles fought around Kiev in the summer of 1943; *Red Lightning* from SSI, a massively detailed simulation of all-out land war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact; and *Rommel* from SSG, which features top-notch re-creations of the Afrika Korps battles, including scenarios for Syria and a hypothetical invasion of Malta.

It would seem, then, that for desktop tank-jockies some kind of millennium may have arrived. Well, not quite. By the turn of the century, improvements in graphics, animation, and data storage will make today's best simulations seem quaint. It will then truly be possible to be in your own private war movie.

And even by today's standards, there's something miss-



Tank *features a number of big, sprawling melee battles, complete with artillery fire and air strikes.*

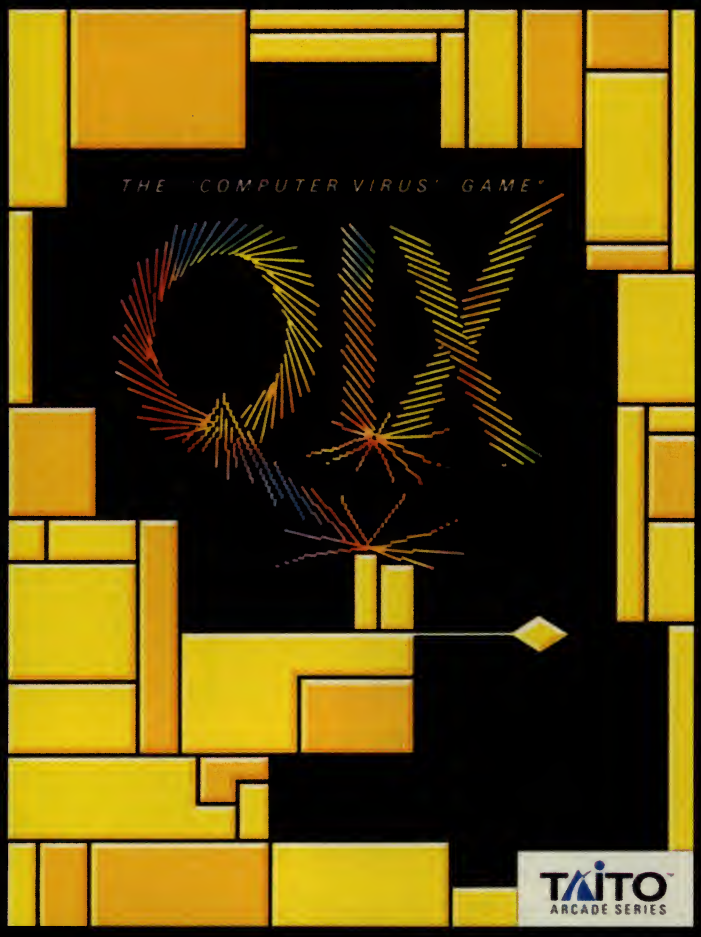


Points of view can be easily shifted in Tank just as in Tank Platoon, *enabling you to savor the action from many perspectives.*

Steel Thunder *lets you command the controversial Bradley Fighting Vehicle — rather a lot of fun, actually.*

VIRUS!

CAN YOU KICK THE QIX® ADDICTION?

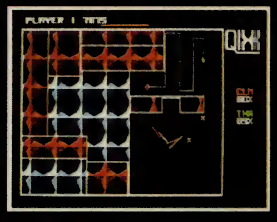


"An action game that rewards fast thinking and fast reflexes... definitely addictive...highly recommended."
—Computer Gaming World

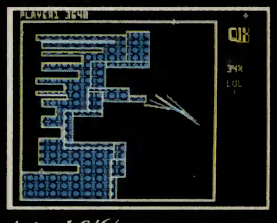
When QIX fever strikes, there is no cure! Like the mind-blowing arcade original, QIX is a computer virus that lives deep inside your computer, attacking without warning. Construct a trap in any one of the billions of configurations possible to immobilize QIX. But watch out for SPARX™ and SPRITZ™ and other deadly energy forms! In this electrical world of high-tech infections, mental dexterity and superior strategy are basic to survival. The practice mode turns beginners into addicts. No one is immune! Get your QIX before QIX gets you!

SUPPORTS AD LIB AND CREATIVE MUSIC SYSTEMS CARDS!

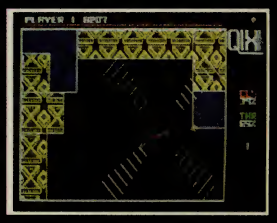
NOW AVAILABLE FOR IBM, TANDY, AND COMPATIBLE COMPUTERS.



Actual Atari screen.



Actual C/64 screen.



Actual Amiga screen.

TAITO™

If you cannot find this product at your local retailer, Visa/Mastercard holders can order direct anywhere in the United States by calling toll-free 1-800-937-0015.

Taito,® Qix,® SPARX™ and SPRITZ,™ are trademarks of Taito America Corporation,
Copyright ©1989. All rights reserved. Atari, Commodore, Amiga, IBM, and Tandy are registered trademarks respectively of Atari Corporation, Commodore Electronics, Inc., Commodore-Amiga, Inc., International Business Machines, Inc., and Tandy Corporation.

ing. Handling a high-tech instrument like an Abrams is a challenge that calls for precise timing, digital dexterity, lightning reflexes, and much concentration. When you've mastered such a simulation, you've *accomplished* something.

But too often mastering the machine takes so much effort, time, and concentration that there are comparatively few seconds left over to savor the actual battles.

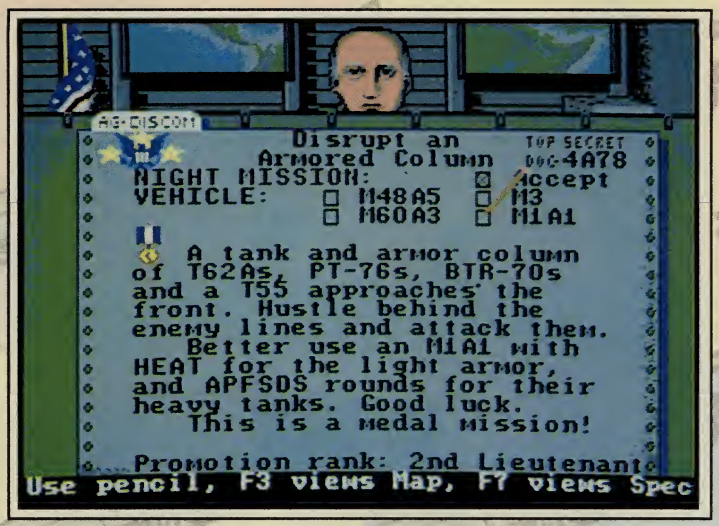
Lucasfilm solved this problem beautifully in their World War II aerial simulations *Battlehawks 1942* and *Their Finest Hour*. By making the flight simulation part of the program very basic — stick, rudder, a couple of pedals and dials, and that's *it* — and concentrating on combat missions and aerial strategy, they created two of the most exciting and authentic WWII programs ever published.

And yet, no one to date has accomplished the same thing for WWII tanks. Surely there is no shortage of colorful, fascinating vehicles: the Panther, the Sherman, the King Tiger, the Cromwell, or the indomitable T-34. Simulated campaigns could range from the deserts of North Africa or the vast plains of the Ukraine to the hedgerows of Normandy.

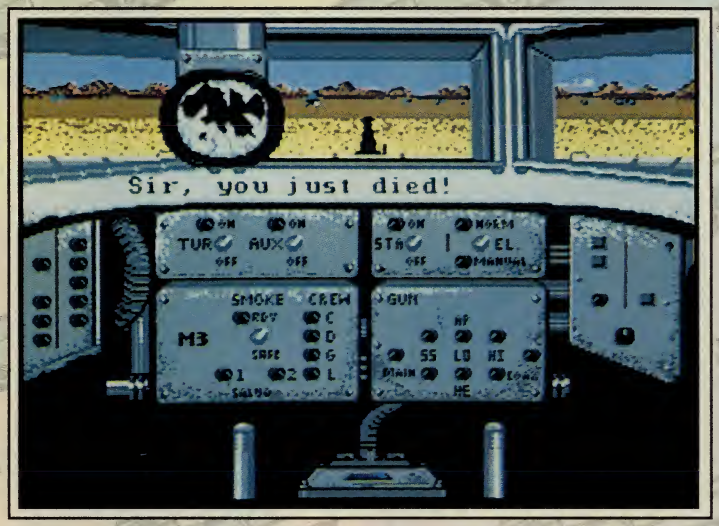
A joystick, a fuel gauge, and a gunsight — that's about all you'd need on the technical side of things. The rest of the time could be spent slugging it out with the enemy's equally brutal, simple machines. What about it, Accolade? Lucasfilm? Access? SSI?

In the meantime, the best contemporary tank simulations offer authenticity, exceptional graphics, and fast-paced excitement — but only if you're willing to invest some time learning how to get the most out of them.

GP



All good tank simulations give you a wide variety of combat missions from which to choose and several levels of difficulty as well.

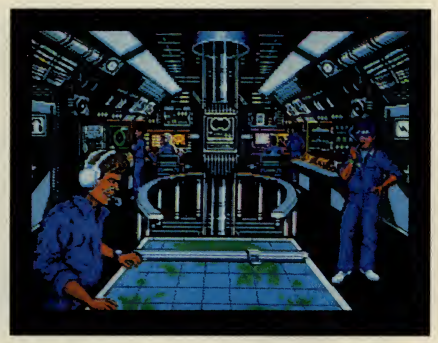


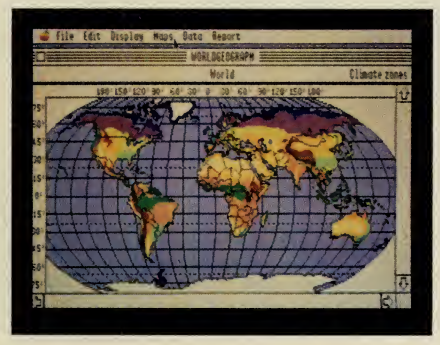
Firefights in Steel Thunder *are exceptionally vivid, with excellent bullet-and-shell strike effects.*

Heavy Metal *lets you control a souped-up dune buggy called a "fast attack vehicle." It's amusing, but not very realistic.*

You can save ammo in Heavy Metal *by blasting personnel carriers and other lightly armored vehicles with your 50-caliber machine gun.*

See The World





And Never Leave Home

Discover a world beyond word processing and spread sheets. Let your computer take you to new lands. Take flight! Spread your wings and travel to exotic places. Let your computer thrill you with new experiences.

FREE BROCHURE!
1-800-333-3944

Software Publishers Association
1101 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 901
Washington, DC 20036

To learn more about home software, call for our free colorful brochure, "The Other Side of Computing".

CONSUMER SOFTWARE SECTION

It describes the variety of software you can use on your computer. Let your computer entertain and educate you!

THE DESKTOP GENERAL

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

OPENING SALVOS FROM THE CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

In Wings, *the simplicity of flying a WWI plane lets you concentrate on savoring the action instead of nursing the instrument panel — a refreshing change from many high-tech simulations.*

With this issue, we're adding this column just for war game enthusiasts – covering all aspects of the genre.

I just returned from the Consumer Electronics Show. Admittedly, CES conditions are not optimal for viewing new games (each exhibit hall roars from nine in the morning until six at night with demonstrations, sales pitches, and the babble of 70,000 delegates), and many games were represented only by short demos or unfinished versions.

Nevertheless, first impressions of a game are more often than not confirmed by deeper acquaintance. And my impression, from quick glimpses in Las Vegas, is that war-gamers have a lot to look forward to.

For example, no game I saw looked better or offered more promise than *Wings* by Cinemaware, a World War I flying aces game that attempts to recapture the romance of early flight. Beginning with a nostalgic, graphically beautiful Kitty Hawk scene, the game follows the memoirs of actual

Graphically, Wings *was one of the standout games at CES. Typical was this intense — and ultimately rather bloody — strafing scene.*

WWI pilots in re-creating a 300-mission campaign. Scenarios include dogfighting (solo or in melee), strafing, and balloon-busting. The graphics are stunning, and, as a flight simulator, *Wings* is one of the easiest to use of any I've tried.

"Quo Vadis?" was the question that came to mind while I viewed *Caesar* from Electronic Arts. The answer? Why, to the chariot races, of course — or to the deck of a trireme at Actium, or to the barbaric wilds of Germania. In this game, you start off as a young, ambitious legion officer and try to become Caesar himself. Well, if Nero's horse could become a senator, why not? Great battle scenes include ram-and-sink naval engagements and furious assaults by barbarian hordes. The interface for this epic seems marvelously fluid and intuitive. All it needs is a big Miklos Rosza soundtrack.

Copter-jockeys should revel in Electronic Arts' *LHX Attack Chopper* — an exciting simulation of the top secret aircraft. You can also fly an Apache, Blackhawk, or tilt-winged Osprey in a variety of missions, environments, and weather conditions. Twelve external views let you enjoy the action from lots of angles, in-

cluding a warhead-view from any missile you choose to fire.

World War II, of course, continues to fascinate players and game designers alike. One of the biggest challenges that remains for a game is to simulate the largest land campaign ever waged: Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi invasion of Russia. SSI's *Second Front* is a mammoth program that stretches from Berlin to Stalingrad and incorporates squad and battery data for 150 German and 200 Soviet divisions. Only a brief demo-loop of this game was available (no hands-on play was possible), but it certainly gives every appearance of being the least-cumbersome Eastern front simulation yet.

The war game genre is not exactly crowded with good simulations of the Russo-German conflict because it's just too vast. SSI's Second Front *looks clean, playable, and accurate. Could it be what we've been waiting for?*

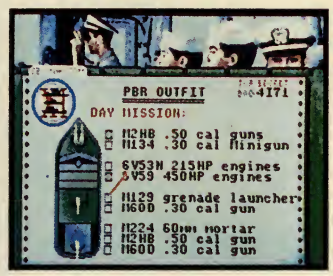
Accolade, whose *Steel Thunder* is one of the most exciting and war-movie-like tank simulators on the market, came on strong during CES with two new products, *Strike Aces* and *Gunboat*. The former simulates a variety of fighter-bombers from several countries. The controls are simple to learn and the animation looked very good. No combat screens were available on my visits to the Accolade booth, so I can't report on that aspect of the game. However, everything else looked first class.

Gunboat, from the designer of *Steel Thunder*, puts you at the controls of a Swift patrol boat in the Mekong Delta (or Central America, which gives the game a distinctly contemporary, if somewhat jingoistic, flair). You get to mix machine gun, mortar, and grenade-launcher armament to match a smorgasbord of missions. This game displays the same kind of action-intense, behind-the-guns graphics as *Steel Thunder*.

Accolade's Strike Aces *also follows the trend toward easier flight simulators. It lets you select from an interesting and eclectic menu of aircraft types.*

A wildly satirical look at a grisly subject makes New World Computing's *Nuclear War* a good candidate for the most off-the-wall war game of the year. Remember that wonderful scene in *Dr. Strangelove* where Slim Pickens, whooping and hollering like John Wayne on PCP, rides a hydrogen bomb down on the "Rooskies?" Well, *Nuclear War* takes off from there and throws you into a madcap world where deranged world leaders (with names like Ronnie Raygun and the Ayatollah Kookamamie) try to nuke each other to a crisp. Skullduggery abounds in this cheerfully apocalyptic game — the failure of certain ploys results, for instance, in a gigantic 16-ton weight dropping on one of your cities. The Amiga version, with typically snappy graphics, is out now; other formats will follow in two or three months.

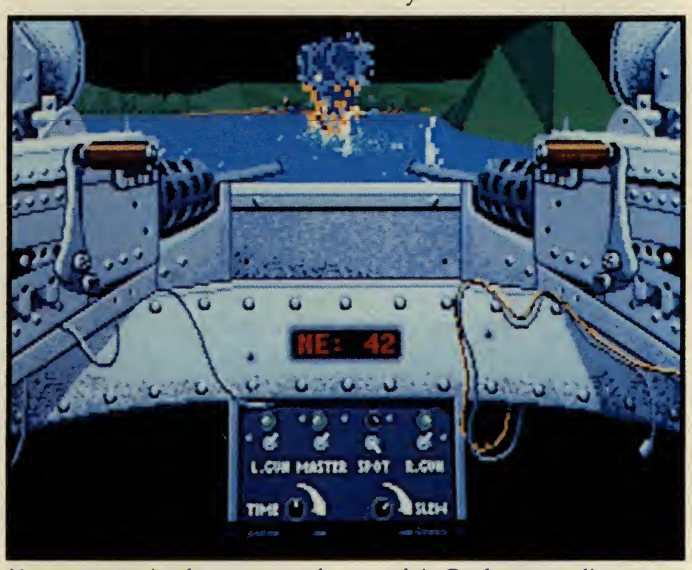
It is unwise, unfair, and in some cases downright cruel, to pin manufacturers down to hard and fast release dates for games that are still in their final stages of development. However, if you average out the various guestimates heard at the show, most of the above games should be available by late spring.



The battle scenes in Gunboat *have the same war movie intensity as those in its predecessor,* Steel Thunder.

And it looks like a good crop of games. Stay tuned to this column for more observations, reviews, and genre updates.

GP



You can customize the armament of your craft in Gunboat *according to your mission.*

ALTERNATE LIVES

NEIL RANDALL

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AND THE 1990S

In this first "Alternate Lives" column, let's take the opportunity to look briefly at the nature of role playing itself — and see what light it casts on the current state of computer fantasy role-playing games.

During the 1980s, designers of computer role-playing games (RPGs) developed some extremely strong systems. Today's computer RPGs are polished, engaging, and, for the most part, extremely well thought out. During the 1990s, it's time to really put these systems to work and recall what the *role playing* in RPGs means.

Personally, I never want to find out what it's like to get scorched by a dragon or zapped by a laser. But I'd love to put myself in the shoes or sandals of a character who talks with a displaced god, who gains the trust of a wounded mutant, or who is forced to assimilate an entire alien culture. To me, that's where the excitement lies.

So far, computer RPGs haven't quite let me do those things. The bases are there: I can create characters with certain attributes, I can become wiser and more skillful, and I can perform some significant interaction with other characters in the story. But my character can't actually *grow* by learning and feeling everything around him.

Playing computer RPGs has become a hobby all its own. Given the time it takes to complete games the size of *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, *BattleTech*, *Ultima V*, *Universe 3*, *Faery Tale Adventure*, *The Third Courier*, or *Space Rogue* (to name just a few), it would be possible for people to spend *all* their gaming hours playing RPGs and nothing else. For many players, completing just two or three computer role-playing games a year takes a tremendous amount of time.

However, if you're like me, you buy more than two or three RPGs a year, and you play every spare hour you can find. You may have been asked, or you may have asked yourself, why you do it. What is there that draws you back to these games, time after time, despite what seems an enormous amount of effort to finish them? For that matter, what motivates you to get into these complex games in the first place?

For me, there are three answers to this question of motivation. The first is the quest: I try to finish the game's quest because I believe it's worth achieving — if only in my hobby life. The second is the sheer joy of exploration, of waiting with bated breath to see what's behind the next door. The third, and the one I'll discuss here, is the idea of role playing itself.

The popularity of computer RPGs is directly descended from the immense

success of *Dungeons and Dragons*, the non-computer role-playing game system started in 1974 by TSR, Inc. (The D&D Basic Set has sold over a million copies in the U.S. alone.) But sometimes it seems that the developers of computer RPGs have forgotten what made *D&D* so popular — permitting players to immerse themselves into a character in a story which has a fantasy setting.

Later non-computer role-playing games — *Traveller, James Bond 007, Paranoia, Gamma World, Ring World* — let players become characters in stories with interplanetary, espionage, or post-holocaust settings. That was the appeal of these games then, and that remains their appeal today.

Two elements make that appeal possible. First, all games require a game master (a dungeon master, in *D&D* lingo) who sets the tone, begins the story, and alters things as the situations demand. Second, all games require at least three (and usually six or seven) human players. Players interact with the group and rely on the dungeon master to keep things moving. If all goes well, the sessions are highly interactive, personal, and memorable.

By contrast, most computer RPGs are played solitaire. While it's possible to have six people sitting around a computer monitor giving individual instructions to their characters in, say, *The Bard's Tale*, such instances are rare. In fact, many people play computer games precisely *because* they can be played solitaire — entire evenings need not be set aside to play. And if the player decides to spend 45 minutes with a game at 1:00 a.m., he or she is free to do so.

But what computer RPGs thereby eliminate is human interaction. A party of characters may well show on the screen, but there is only one player to control all of them, only one player to make the decisions. Similarly lost is any reliance on the game master. The computer not only tells you what's going on, but it also restricts your activities. For these reasons, combat is the most common component of computer RPGs. It's the only part of the game master's role that the computer can really handle.

All this points to a simple conclusion: in computer RPGs, you don't really role play at all. You control the actions of the on-screen characters, but you interject little of your own personality into those characters. Doing so is hard enough in *D&D* and other paper RPGs; it's virtually impossible in computer RPGs.

Take a look at *D&D*'s direct computer offshoot, the impressive and faithful *AD&D* (Advanced Dungeons & Dragons) series by SSI. In the most recent, *Champions of Krynn*, you form and control a party of six adventurers. At the beginning of the game, the commandant of the outpost tells you what has to be done, in the fashion of a *D&D* non-player character. You equip your party, memorize spells, and leave the outpost to solve that portion of the quest. On the way, you meet travelers, who might offer advice or goods. Most often, however, you meet monsters.

There are important moments of decision-making in *Krynn*, and here the game most closely approaches role playing. Do you follow the shadow people, do you trust an approaching character, do you surrender an item to the dragon? Usually, the answer is obvious, while the answer in a board RPG would depend on the player personalities. The game gives you complete control over character actions in combat (a very strong point of this series), but you never quite feel as if you're in real control of the quest. In that respect, it's little different from any other computer RPG.

In none of these computer games do character personalities matter very much. Progress doesn't depend on whether one character is braver than the next, whether one seeks revenge and another advocates restraint, or whether one has a bloodlust while another preaches pacifism. These are elements of board RPGs, but not computer RPGs.

In New World Computing's *Might and Magic II*, for example, and similarly in Sir-Tech's *Wizardry V*, you find yourself frequently embroiled in combat, and your only real option is to destroy your enemies. If you don't, you receive no experience and no treasure, both of which are necessary to improve your characters.

Fantasy RPGs that do not involve parties of characters fare no better as true role-playing games. Microillusion's *Faery Tale Adventure*, Activision's *Prophecy*, and Origin System's *Times of Lore* all put you in control of a single character striving to save the land from a deadly evil. But you role play in these games to the same degree that you role play in a quest-based arcade game. You aren't really given a choice of playing out the character's personality (or personalities in the case of *Faery Tale*) because you aren't given any decisions to make which require an understanding of that personality. The only game that even approaches such decision-making is Origin System's *Ultima IV*, in which you must answer some very difficult dilemmas at the beginning. In true role-playing exercises, dilemmas are vital.

Science fiction RPGs tend to acknowledge role-playing to a slightly greater degree. In Electronic Arts' *Starflight*, for example, you interact with alien civilizations. Figuring out how to handle them is critical to your success. In EA's *Sentinel Worlds*, you explore planets, conversing with the people you meet. Here, and in other science fiction games like Origin System's *Space Rogue*, you are well-advised to think about your form of interaction *before* you actually interact.

As science fiction RPGs become more sophisticated, alien interaction will become increasingly involved — at least, it should. Science fiction RPGs will become extremely interesting if players are forced into such actions as playing the role of a confused science officer who understands both sides of an attempted extinction of a species, or the role of a medical officer torn between her adherence to the Hippocratic oath and her intuition that saving this one alien life will result in the destruction of others.

Fantasy RPGs will only become stronger role-playing exercises when they begin to abandon their overwhelming reliance on combat. It is possible in *Faery Tale Adventure* to wander the countryside for several minutes before encountering enemies; however, in most games, they are around every corner. Fantasy characters should strive with gods, fall in love, take pity on the oppressed — all those things they do in books but not in games. Perhaps if designers replaced three out of every four combat encounters with an encounter with an intelligent being, true role playing would finally come about.

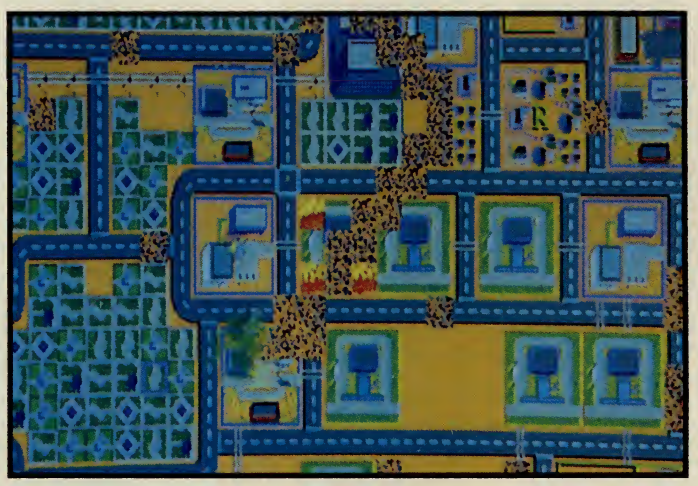
These comments are not meant to sound negative. As I noted earlier, today's computer role-playing games have achieved a notable — and very playable — level of quality. However, when RPG designers are able to let players *truly* immerse themselves in a role, these games will change from the engaging to the indispensable — the backbone of interactive entertainment.

GP

VIRTUAL REALITY

SELBY BATEMAN

WORLDS IN SIMULATION



Sim City

"Give me a place to stand, and I will move the world," Archimedes said, perhaps somewhat wistfully. He had no place to stand. Sure, he could work the math, but how could he really *show* someone that long earth-tilting lever in operation? If the Greek mathematician were alive today, he'd no doubt be using a personal computer to *simulate* rearranging worlds.

Not only are computer simulations changing the way we view our own world, they're often a lot of fun. The best kind of fun — amusement that also teaches us how to open new doors of perception onto what we call the real world. And when it comes to PC entertainment, game players are discovering that simulations are especially fascinating.

Perhaps you're swooping fast and low over the Persian Gulf, readying the AIM-9H Sidewinder air-to-air missiles in your F-19 Stealth fighter. Maybe you're downshifting your Porsche 959 to avoid an oil spill as you duel with the Ferrari F40 just ahead. Or do you find yourself guiding the fortunes of the troubled nation of Chimerica, serving as the presidente while rioters take to the streets of Poyais and your own defense minister starts wondering aloud how long you'll last before the next coup?

Every software developer involved with computer simulations would love to create the equivalent of a real experience — a virtual reality. The present limitations of computer hardware and software restrict developers — but less so today than yesterday. Tomorrow, developers will be closer still to the real thing.

If the term *virtual reality* is new to you, it won't be for long. You'll be hearing more and more about it in the coming years as computer simulations grow more sophisticated. The computer-aided design (CAD) leader, Autodesk, is pioneering one form of virtual reality with its Cyberspace experimentation, literally dropping the user into a computer-generated world.

Mattel is using technology invented originally for space exploration by NASA to develop and sell its Power Glove controller and special 3-D game software for the Nintendo Entertainment System. American Interactive Media (AIM) is working with compact disc-

interactive (CD-I) technology to create full-motion video experiences for computer users across a broad spectrum of entertainment and education ideas.

The Father of Invention

"If necessity is the mother of invention, play is its father," write Bruce Joffe and William Wright in an article describing the groundbreaking *Sim City* urban management simulation. Most people have heard of the game by now. It's been featured everywhere from *Newsweek* and *The New York Times* to our own pages, recently winning our first *Game Player's* PC Game of the Year Award. (See the complete list of award winners in this issue.)

William Wright is the computer programmer who first came up with the idea for *Sim City* after several years of growing fascination with the way cities work or, increasingly, don't work.

For those who haven't yet had the pleasure of seeing *Sim City*, the game lets you simulate city planning and management. You build the residential, commercial, and industrial areas; place roads, bridges, police and fire stations, and power utilities; and balance the city's budget while answering demands from the Sims (simulated citizens) who move in and live there. The game is stunning in concept and execution and has opened the creative doors to a new type of simulation gaming.

The PC version sells for $49.95 from Maxis Software, and the company has introduced school and lab pack versions for teachers. There's also a new *Sim City Terrain Editor* that lets you custom design your landforms, placing rivers, forests, coastlines, and open land in and around your city.

Sim City not only represents a breakthrough in PC gaming, it also demonstrates the hallmark of a great simulation — depth of experience. There's a lot going on here. Beneath the meticulous graphics, the charming cityscape details, and the fun of placing power plants and fighting off urban blight, there's an invisible underlying system that makes the simulation act as much like a real city as possible.

And that's what we'll be seeing in PC simulations from now on — systems that have been developed with an eye toward a real experience. It takes hundreds and hundreds of designing and programming hours to bring it off, but if that realism is *not* there, it only takes a few minutes for a game player to spot its absence.

A Wealth of Simulations

Hot on the heels of *Sim City* is the new PC version of *Populous* from Electronic Arts, a decidedly different simulation, at once more cosmic and more fanciful. *Populous* doesn't make you worry about something as small as a city — you've got an entire *world* to create and manage.

Suddenly, you've got the powers of a minor god, simulating things on a much larger stage. The game has become one of the most tested games yet by our editors, most of whom already think of themselves as minor deities. You'll find a review of *Populous* in this issue.

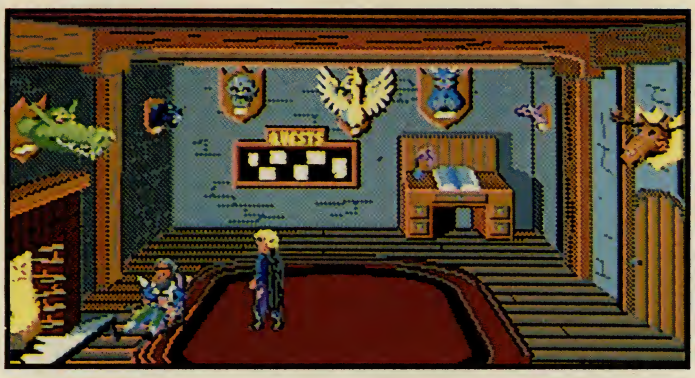
The past year has brought a wealth of simulations for the PC, with better color graphics, improved sound effects and music, and a broader array of topics. I think in particular of such *Game Player's* PC Award winners as *The Duel: Test Drive II*, the racing simulation from Accolade; *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, the aerial combat game from MicroProse; *Lakers Versus Celtics*, the basketball simulation from Electronic Arts; *Hardball II*, a follow-up to the baseball simulation from Accolade; and *Hidden Agenda*, a geopolitical simulation with a hands-on human perspective from Springboard.

There's a herd of battle tank simulations (also covered in this issue) for you to try; the *Search for the Titanic* oceanographic search and recover simulation; and version 4.0 of Microsoft's perennially popular *Microsoft Flight Simulator*.

The 1990s will be a terrific decade for computer simulations. Over the next couple of months be on the lookout for Mindscape's *Guns & Butter*, a geopolitical simulation by game designer extraordinaire Chris Crawford that builds on his pioneering work in *Balance of Power* and *Balance of Power — The 1990 Edition*; what looks like the start of a bevy of railroading simulations such as Art Dink's *Railroad Empire* and MicroProse's *Sid Meier's Golden Age of Railroads*; Britannica's *Fleet Action* naval historical simulation; the *Street Rod* hot rod game from California Dreams; Cinemaware's *T.V. Sports: Basketball* and *T.V. Sports: Baseball*; *Red Baron*, a World War I aerial combat game from Dynamix; *PGA Tour Golf: The Computer Simulation* from Electronic Arts; and SubLogic's *Flight Simulator: A.T.P. (Airline Transport Pilot)*.

There are more coming, more than we have room to list here. But we'll be tracking the best and the most innovative in this column and elsewhere in each issue of the *Game Player's PC Strategy Guides*. There'll be plenty to write about.

GP



Be sure to stop in and see Wolfgang while you're in Spielburg. Not only can you check the bulletin board for reward-paying quests, but Wolfgang knows the scoop on the baron and his unfortunate family.

Hero's Quest I: So You Want to Be a Hero

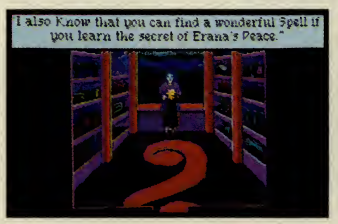
LESLIE MIZELL

Those of us who have followed King Graham and his family through four episodes of *King's Quest* or Roger Wilco through three *Space Quest* adventures know that the games are characterized by an excellent combination of challenge, humor, and graphics. Well, **Sierra** has begun a new series with *Hero's Quest I*, and it does the seemingly impossible — it takes all the established series to a new level.

One of the shortcomings of Sierra's other games is that once you've solved the quest, all you can do is retrace your steps looking for points you might have missed the first time. But in *Hero's Quest*, though the plot of the story doesn't change, certain aspects of the game change depending on the character you choose — fighter, magician, or thief. In other words, you can play *Hero's Quest* three times and always find new challenges. You can also save your character to use in *Hero's Quest II*.

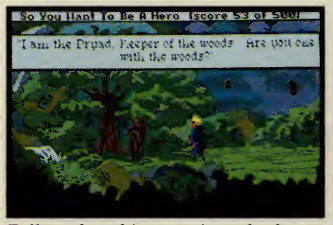
The game is set in Spielburg, a land beset with misfortune. Not only is the land besieged by a band of ruthless brigands, but also the baron (Stefan von Spielburg, naturally) has lost his son, daughter, and court jester to the enchantment of the evil Baba Yaga. These people are sorely in need of a hero.

Luckily, you wander into town at just the right time.



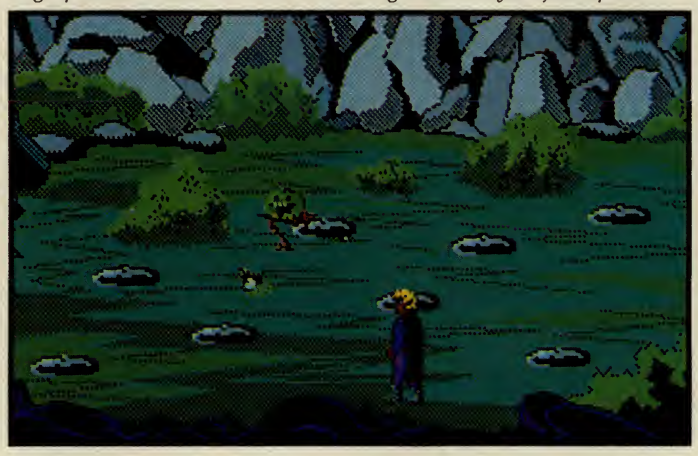
Just because you're a fighter or a thief doesn't mean that you shouldn't visit Zara. She'll be polite, but don't expect her to sell you any spells unless you have magic powers.

The Brauggi isn't blue with the cold — he's hungry. But your meager food rations won't help him. He needs some vitamin C. Didn't you see some apples around? Lots *of apples.*



Follow the white stag into the forest, and you'll meet the Dryad. If you can do her a favor, she'll reward you with some information and an item for a magic potion.

You haven't seen these plants in any local nursery. The Seed-Spitting Spirea is rare, even in Spielburg. But what the Dryad wants, she gets. Use your throwing skills, or try the fetch spell.



There aren't too many green-furred creatures in Spielburg, so you were lucky to find the meeps. They're friendly critters and will do a little spring cleaning if you ask nicely.

THREE CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF A QUEST

Not unexpectedly, the way you go about solving your quest depends on the character you're playing. In turn, the effectiveness of your character depends on how you allot the 50 points you're given at the beginning of the game to add to your character's inherent skills.

For example, a thief needs stealth and lock-picking skills, a magician needs magic and intelligence, and a fighter needs strength and weapons use. You should be careful with your choices — there's no going back to give your hero climbing skills midway through the adventure.

Sierra suggests these allotments: for the fighter, add 20 points to strength and ten points each to vitality, agility, and weapons use; for the magician, add ten to strength and intelligence, 15 to agility, five

If you go to the mushroom ring after sunset, you'll meet a flock of flirtatious fairies. Play your cards right, and you'll get another item for the dispel potion.

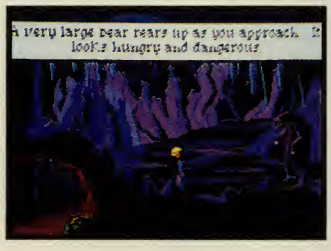
Even if you know the chant to make Baba Yaga's house behave, you still have to get past the gatekeeper. Take a look at his bony countenance. He's really green with envy. What do the other skulls have that he doesn't have?

to magic, and five to vitality (what you do with the extra five points is up to you); and for the thief, add ten each to strength, vitality, weapons use, agility, and luck.

Basically, the main quest is solved identically no matter which character you choose. But 50 of the 500 points required for a perfect score are specific to your character. It's easiest to play the game as the magician, who only needs to accomplish ten acts to earn his 50 points. The fighter needs 13 acts, while the poor thief needs 22. But then again, neither of the other two characters gets to ransack a house in the dead of night.

Erana's Peace is a great place to sleep. It's cheaper than the inn, and breakfast is provided.

As the magician, your most important job is to find and learn magic. Ask every friendly face for spells — some of the most unlikely creatures have magic scrolls tucked away. Zara has several spells for sale in her magic shop. Unfortunately, you have a constant cash-flow problem, so shopping may prove difficult.



This poor bear can't sleep because his stomach is growling, and he can't get free to search for food. A kobald in the cavern behind him has the key to his chain. But there's more in that cavern than meets the eye.

Buy the fetch spell from Zara first, then find the healer's missing ring (it's not far from her front door). With the reward money, you can buy the open spell. Once you've found Erana's Peace and the calm spell, you can explore the forest without much danger. Remember that the calm spell should be cast *before* you enter a

TOP GUNS.

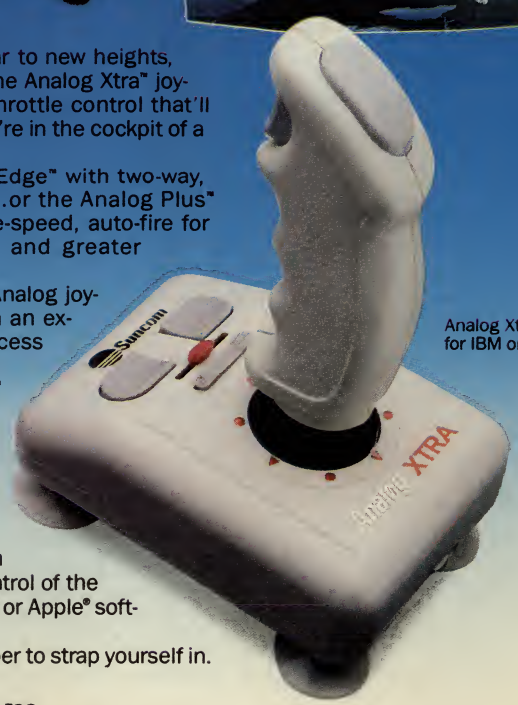
If you're ready to soar to new heights, Suncom brings you the Analog Xtra™ joystick with a built-in throttle control that'll make you feel like you're in the cockpit of a F-16 fighter.

Or try the Analog Edge™ with two-way, switchable buttons...or the Analog Plus™ that features variable-speed, auto-fire for increased accuracy and greater control.

All three Suncom Analog joysticks are made with an exclusive, patented process known as *Injected Resistor Technology*™. This feature allows you to fly missions long after other joysticks have waved their white flag.

Fly the new lineup of Analog joysticks from Suncom, and take control of the most challenging IBM® or Apple® software games.

Please, just remember to strap yourself in.



Analog Xtra for IBM only.

Suncom TECHNOLOGIES 6400 W. Gross Point Rd., Niles, IL 60648 708/647-4040

Original art of FALCON AT, The F-16 Fighter Simulation supplied by Spectrum Halobyte.

combat situation. But some combat — especially against the weak goblins — is an easy way to pick up a few silvers. And Zara still has that flame dart spell you've had your eye on.

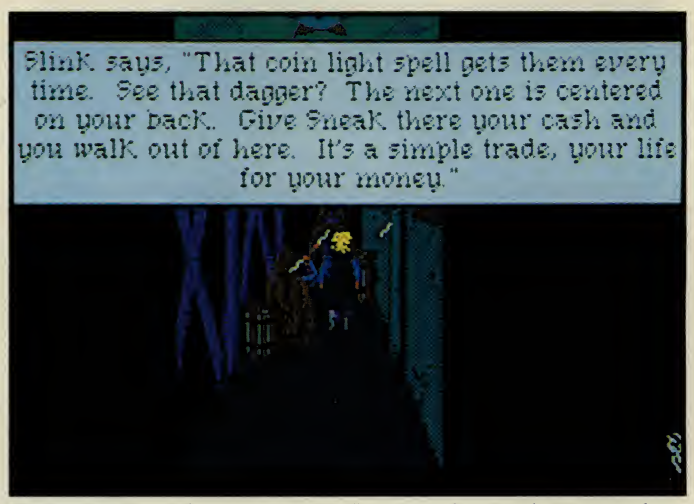
If you're the fighter, your mission is clear, so grab your sword and get ready to whack some brigands. And some goblins. And a purple saurus or two. Actually, you won't earn all 50 points unless you kill one of each of the strange species that inhabits the forest. Maybe you should take some fighting lessons before getting too far into your adventure.

Thieves can get by with very little sleep — a good thing since they spend a good portion of their nights in other people's houses. Check the downstairs thoroughly, but listen to the cat. He knows what he's doing.

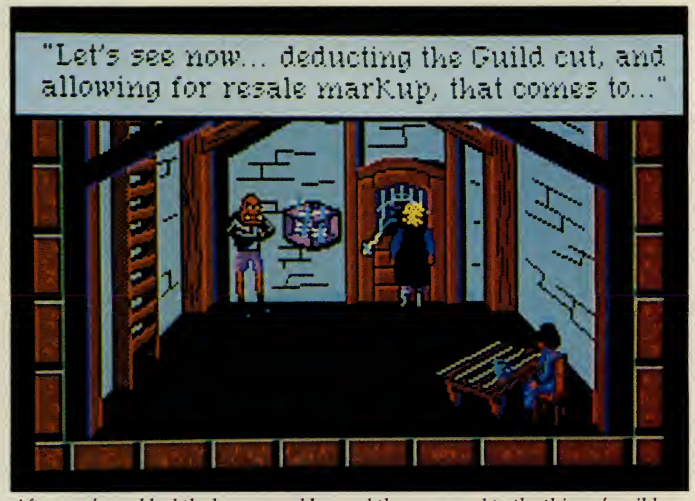
As the thief, you've got high stamina, but lack the strength needed to take on every enemy you run across. Whenever you get in a jam, just run away. If you can elude your pursuer, you'll earn valuable stealth, luck, vitality, and intelligence points. But don't panic if you do end up in a fight. With the money you earn from your criminal ways, you are the richest adventurer and can afford to buy lots of healing potions from the healer. You should remember that practice makes perfect. If you can't pick a lock or climb a tree the first time, try, try again.

DEEP IN THE FOREST PRIMEVAL

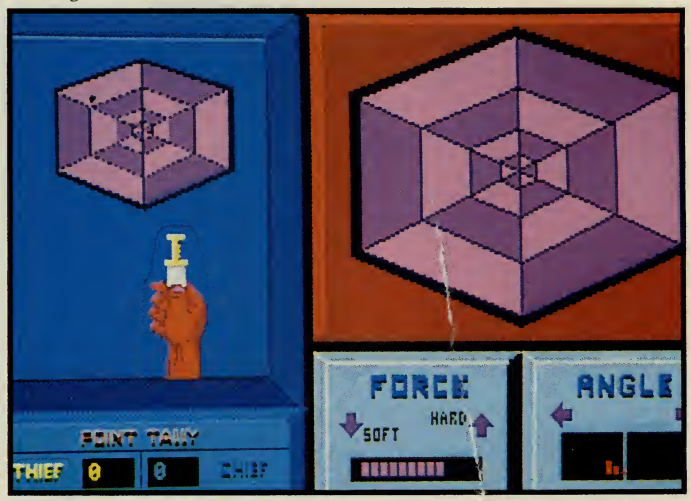
Once the fighter has spoken to everyone in Spielburg, he really doesn't need to return to the city unless he needs more apples or equipment. The magician should revisit Zara until he has bought all the spells she offers. But the thief *has* to spend one night inside the town walls, breaking into



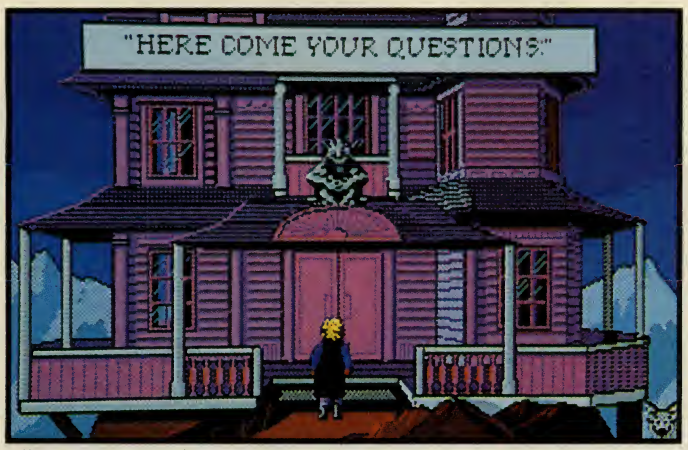
Thieves should read the manual from the "Famous Adventurer's Correspondence School" if they hope to escape from their compatriots with their coffers (and lives) intact.



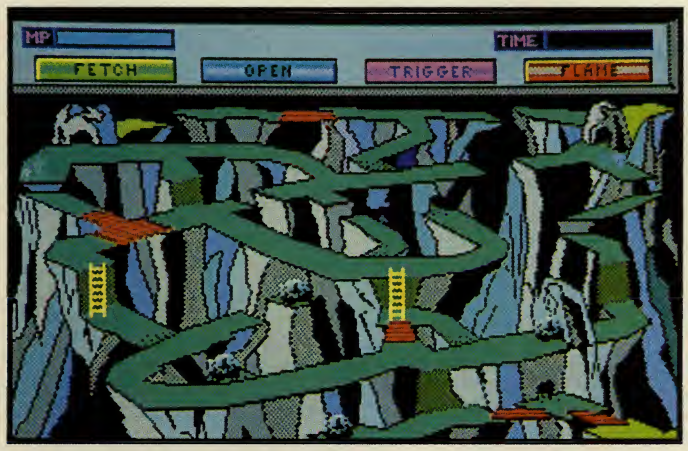
After you've robbed the houses and learned the password to the thieves' guild, go spend the night in the inn. There's plenty of time to fence your goods the next morning.



These thieves don't seem to have any respect for you. Maybe you should earn it by beating the boss in a game of Dag-Nab-It. It's easy to play, so don't be afraid to bet big.



All adventurers should visit Erasmus, but magicians have an especially important reason to call. The gargoyle will give you a test before he lets you in. Answering his questions truthfully is not as important as answering them the way he wants *them answered.*



A magician can get points just for playing Mage's Maze, but you can get more than twice as many for winning.

Everyone can benefit from a lesson with the fighting master, but only the fighter should continue the lessons until the student becomes the master.

houses, making contact with fellow thieves, and locating the thieves' guild. Don't keep visiting the city waiting for the closed stores to open. That would be a long wait.

All three adventurers follow approximately the same path on their treks through the woods. Each should visit the healer to learn of sub-quests, and each should get some information and fighting experience from the folks around the castle. Then they should start exploring.

Many people dislike mapping, and, while it is probably helpful in *Hero's Quest*, it is certainly not necessary. If you wander around enough, you'll start to see connections between different locations.

If you fight the goblins in the ambush site, don't be surprised if you have to take on two or three at once. The reward might be worth it, though, if you kill the winner of last night's goblin poker party. So don't forget to search the bodies.

For example, to get to Erana's Peace, you go straight up the screen from the centaur farmer until you hit a corner. Go right, then up, and you've arrived. Go back out of Erana's Peace, turn right, and you'll meet the ogre and find the kobald's cave. There are enough unique screens intermixed with the bare forest for you to remember basic directions without a full-fledged map.

But whether you have a map or not, you need to explore the woods thoroughly —not just once, but twice. You might pick up one item you need during the day and then another after night falls. A mushroom ring may yield magic components during the day, but go back at night and you'll find fairies dancing in the moonlight. Or you might find nothing in the graveyard in the cold light of day, but at night you can pull up the mandrake plant for Baba Yaga.

QUESTING 101

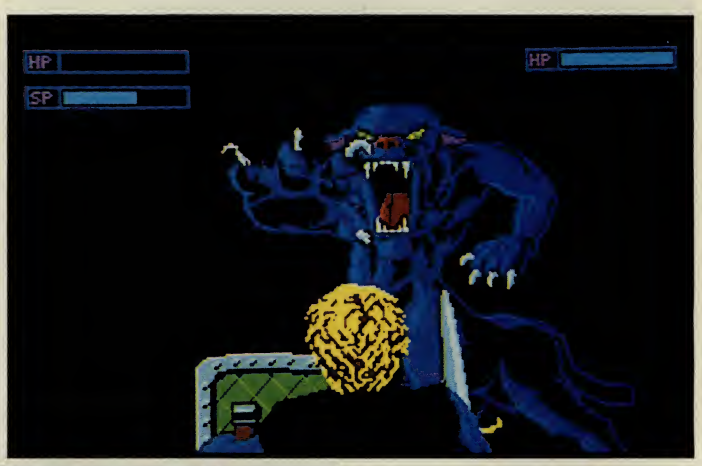
Before you start talking to the strange creatures you meet throughout the forest, you should make sure you've chatted with the healer. She'll pay well for some strange ingredients for her potions. It's easiest for the fighter to collect items such as the cheetaur claws and troll beard, since all he has to do is defeat them in battle. The magician and thief will have to use wilier methods.

When you enter the snow field, you'll meet a blue giant brandishing a club. But how dangerous could a creature be if he loves poetry as much as Brauggi does? Bargain with him to get the glowing gem. Still, don't expect to assuage his hunger with a few paltry food rations.

Eavesdropping isn't demeaning, especially if you're the one being discussed. Catch Bruno and Brutus in an afternoon chat, and you'll learn some valuable information.

Across the road from the snow field is a lovely waterfall — just the contemplative place for a Cockney hermit to settle down. You don't need to spend a lot of time with the hermit. Just ask him about the wizard and move on. His gesture of a bed is kind, but not very practical. Adventurers need more comfortable bedding than straw on a rock floor if they plan to keep up their strength.

Now that the hermit has given you some clues about Erasmus, the wizard, you can make the journey into the mountains to pay a call. You'll be quizzed by a gargoyle perched on Erasmus's garish house, but don't buckle under the pressure. That gargoyle just wants to make sure your opinions jibe with his. So answer the questions the way you think he would. And for goodness sake, don't admit to any criminal doings.



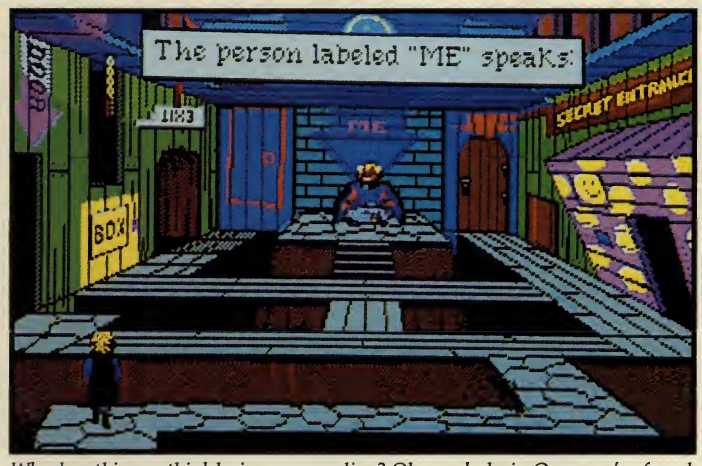
Oops! You didn't survive this battle. If you are killed three times by the same creature, you probably just don't have enough strength. Take on some piddling enemy to build your strength before the rematch.

Over on the other side of the forest, look for a white stag to lead you to the Dryad. She, in turn, will send you to a corner populated by the seed-spitting spirea. The cliffs on which the unusual flora flourishes are

The thief has a hard time getting into the brigands' fortress because he lacks the strength to fight the minotaur or the spells that would calm the feisty bull. Hit F4 for a high-speed hero, and sneak across the other side of the gate.

All the adventurers might need to spend several days building up their characters' status. Some important skills can't be built up by just wandering around.

OK, you're inside the brigands' fortress — what now? Definitely save your game, since the fortress is loaded with booby traps. And take a good look at the brigand trio in the dining hall. What a bunch of stooges!



Who does this guy think he is — a comedian? Oh, maybe he is. Once you've found Yorick, the court jester, you know Elsa can't be far behind.

Your quest is almost finished when you arrive in the brigand leader's office. Now all you have to do is figure out when to use the dispel potion, grab the magic mirror, escape the brigands, use the mirror on Baba Yaga, and live happily ever after.

not a good place to build climbing skills. Try another method to get the seed.

The friendly meeps live in the forest equivalent of manholes. Talk to them when they pop out. Only one of them has the item you need for the healer.

HERO AT LARGE

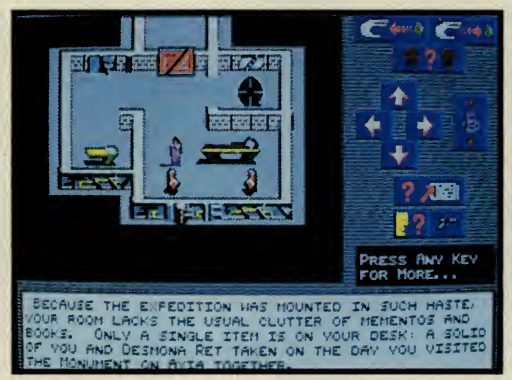
Once you've completed the elementary quests, such as finding all the items wanted by the healer, freeing the baron's son, and collecting the components for the dispel potion, you've graduated from hero-wannabe to hero-in-the-making. Now you're ready to enter the brigands' fortress.

You should already be familiar with the roly-poly Antwerp from your forest travels, and you should already have gotten a key from Bruno and Brutus (by fair means or foul). The Antwerp is the guard of the secret entrance to the fortress, so search his corner of the forest until you find the hidden door. Your toughest battles lie ahead, so your adventurer should have high status marks for his particular skills — strength, magic, or stealth.

Unless you like retracing your steps, you should save the game at every sign of progress. Actually, it's a good idea to have two files and alternate between them. That way, if you've taken a large misstep, you won't have too far to backtrack. The end is near — you don't want to trip yourself up.

Hero's Quest is part Robin Hood, part *Lord of the Rings*, and part John Wayne Western. Undeniably enjoyable to play, it never takes itself too seriously, never deceives the player with ridiculous plot twists, and never lets up on the action. Nonetheless, it always demands the player's full concentration and imagination. For many of us adventure fans, Sierra can't come out with *Hero's Quest II: Trial by Fire* soon enough.

GP



You begin the expedition in your captain's quarters. There's a wall safe that you should visit in the upper right corner. Like many objects in the game, the safe contains more than meets the eye.

Universe 3

NEIL RANDALL

Sequels.

In movies, books, even board games: sequels seemed to define the 1980s. You could see an endless stream of *Friday the 13ths*, read a limitless array of *Tarnsman of Gors*, and play a variety of editions of Trivial Pursuit. Once something became popular, it was followed up.

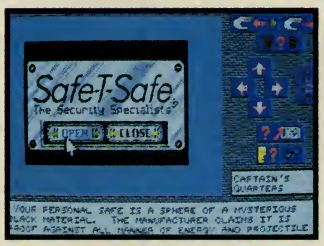
Not surprisingly, sequels hit the computer game market as well. *Wizardry* gave way to *Wizardry* 2 through 5. *Ultima* spawned *Ultima II* through *VI*, while three *Bard's Tales*, four *King's Quests*, two *Arkanoids*, two *Star Sagas*, and a couple of *Double Dragons* worked their way through the bestseller lists.

More than anything else, computer game sequels have been characterized by their reliance on a single game system. Players of *Ultima II* find *Ultima III* easy to assimilate; players of *The Bard's Tale* get into *The Bard's Tale II* quite effortlessly, and so on. Each new release provides enhanced features and (usually) smoother play, but for the most part the playing experience is very similar as you move from sequel to sequel.

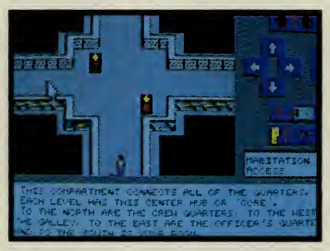
All of which brings us to *Universe 3*. If you have played *Universe* or *Universe II*, you'll understand why the *Universe* system has been called "a spreadsheet in space." The first two *Universes* offered rich gaming worlds with an enormous number of strategic variations, but the games demanded considerable manipulation of numbers. *Universe II*, in fact, came with more than 100 pages of instructions.

The system was well received critically, and it acquired a strong — almost cultlike — following, but for **Omnitrend**, true commercial success was still just around the corner.

Except for a similar science fiction setting, *Universe 3* is nothing like *Universe* or *Universe II*. The first games in the series were strategy based and numbers oriented. This latest one, by contrast, is a graphics-rich role-playing game. It is unusual for a company to change the game system in an already established sequel, but *Universe 3* makes you hope that other developers will change theirs as well.

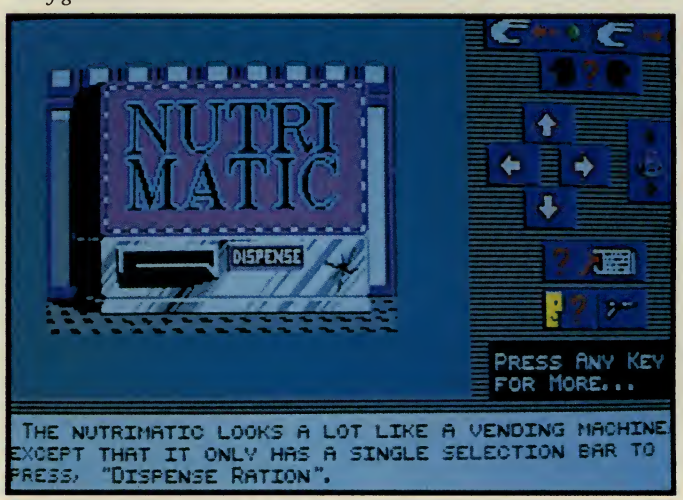


By zooming in on the safe, you can open it and remove its contents. From here you receive your mission orders and a security card. You will also find a personal note.



Outside your quarters is a typical hub in the ship. Each of the passageways leads somewhere, while the stairs lead to the upper and lower levels. Explore this floor before going elsewhere.

The Nutrimatic won't give you much, but you'll be glad for what you get. Take it with you — you never know when you'll need it. Of course, it might just as easily get stolen.



SPIES, TRAITORS, AND DIPLOMATS

The premise of this game is unusual. You are Alex G. Seward, captain of the Ulysses-class vessel FWS *Union*. Once a spy for the Federated Worlds, you have now been assigned to travel to the HomeCluster, where your culture originated. All contact with the HomeCluster has been lost, which has

VISA

Over **3000** Titles in Stock! If you dont see it listed here, just call we may just have it for you!

MICROTYME

A DIVISION OF MICRO PERIPHERALS, INC.

4049 MARSHALL RD. • KETTERING, OHIO 45429

Complete line of P.C.'s, (XT, AT, 386) Accessories and Supplies If it"s for a P.C. we probably have it !

DISCOVER

C.O.D.

688 Attack Sub 32	Code Name Ice Man 39	F-19 44	Kings Quest 1, 2, 3 or 4 29	Savage 23	Third Courier 32
A-10 Tank Killer ..... Call	Colonels Bequest 39	F40 Pursuit Simulator 29	Kristal 31	Search for the Titanic 26	Time and Magik 25
Abrams Battle Tank 26	Combat Course 26	Falcon AT 39	Lancelot 25	Sentinel Worlds 1 38	Times of Lore 26
Airball 26	Conquest of Camelot 39	Federation 32	Leisure Suit Larry 29	Shark Attack 32	Titan 29
Airborne Ranger 26	Conspiracy 32	Fellowship of the Ring 25	Leisure Suit Larry 2 29	Silpheed 23	Total Eclipse 26
Alcatraz 32	Corruption 25	Flight of the Intruder 32	Leisure Suit Larry 3 38	Skate or Die 23	Trials of Honor 34
Ancient Art of War 28	Cribbage/Gin King 38	Fools Errand 34	Life and Death 33	Snow Strike 29	Trojan 21
Android Decision 24	Cycles 29	Gauntlet 2 32	Magic Candle 34	Solitare Royalle 23	Twilight's Ransome 25
Annals of Rome 26	Death Bringer 26	Ghost Busters II 28	Magic Johnson Basketball ... 25	Sorcerer Lord 26	Tycoon 31
Arkanoid 2 22	Defcon 5 16	Golf Doctor 38	Manhunter 2 (S.F.) 31	Socerian 32	Ultima Trilogy 39
Axe of Rage 21	Defender of the Crown 32	Grail Quest 18	Might and Magic 1 or 2 31	Space Hanier 24	Vette! 32
Balance of Power 1990 29	Deluxe Win, Loose, Draw.... 16	Grand Slam Bridge 38	Murder Club 25	Space Quest 3 37	Vivions of Aftermath 26
Barbarian 25	Demon Stalkers 24	Halls of Montezuma 31	Neatherworld 25	Space Racer 21	Wizard Wars 29
Bards Tale 32	Demon's Winter 24	Heat Wave 26	Neuromancer 31	Space Station Oblivion 29	Wizardy 2, 3, 4 or 5 31
Battle Chess 32	Devon Aire 26	Heavy Metal 29	Nevermind 26	Speedball 26	W.C. Leader Board **(Sound)** 36
Better Dead than Alien 22	Die Hard 25	Hero's Quest 39	Omnicron Conspiracy 31	Star Fleet 2 38	X-Men 25
Black Hole (3D Game!) 32	Don't Go Alone 26	Hole-in-one-Mini. Golf 23	Operation Clean Streets 23	Stargoose 26	Zak McKracken 29
Bridge 6.0 25	Double Dragon 26	Hostage 26	Out Run 26	Steel Thunder 26	Zany Golf 28
Budokan 26	Double Dragon 2 26	Hoyle's Book of Games 23	Police Quest 1 or 2 31	Strider 22	
Capone 29	Dr. Doom's Revenge 29	Hunt for Red October 33	Rambo 3 22	Strike Zone 32	
Captain Blood 26	Echelon 33	Indiana Jones-Last Crusade	Rampage 25	Strip Poker 2 26	
Cannen Sandiego	Elway's Quarterback 19	* Action Game 25	Rastan 23	Take Down 23	
* Where in Europe 27	Empire 33	* Graphic Adventure 32	Red Lightning 41	Tank 32	
* Where in the U.S.A. 27	European Challenge 13	Indy Jones-Temple-Doom ... 25	Robocop 25	Techno Cop 26	
* Where in Time 27	Exolon 25	International Team Sports ... 23	Roller Games 23	Test Drive 2 .... **(Wow!)** 28	
* Where in the World 25	Eye of the Storm 29	Jack Nicklaus, vol. 2 13	Romace of 3 Kingdoms 45	* Cars Disk 13	
Centerfold Squares 20	F-15 Strike Eagle 2 35	King of Chicago 10	Sargon 4 31	* Scenery Disk 13	

AdLib Music Card
Regular ..... CALL
Bundle ..... CALL
Adds GREAT sound to IBM games! (Finally!)
Roland MT-32 In Stock !!
Call For Information

HOURS: M-F 9 a.m.-9 p.m. EST
SAT 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

ALL 50 STATES CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-255-5835

For Order Status or Tech. Info, Call (513) 294-6236

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

NO EXTRA CHARGES FOR CREDIT CARDS! - Minimum order $15 - C.O.D: Yes, if all Shipping Charges are PRE-PAID - Shipping: Hardware, minimum $4; Software and most accessories, minimum $3 - Next day shipment available at extra charge - We ship to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico (UPS Blue Label Only), APO and FPO - Canadian orders, actual shipping plus 5%, minimum $5 - Ohio residents add 6% sales tax - Please allow 2 weeks for personal or company checks to clear - All defective products require a Return Authorization Number to be accepted for repair or replacement - No free trials or credit - Returns subject to 20% re-stocking charge - Due to changing market conditions, call toll free for latest price and availability of product. FOR YOUR PROTECTION, WE CHECK ALL CREDIT CARD ORDERS FOR FRAUD.

MARKETPLACE

THE ULTIMATE HINT KIT
for IBM Compatibles

Need help in an adventure game? Reach for The Ultimate Hint Kit including such features as: Walk-thrus, Maps, and Character Editors. This four disk set has over 30 Walk-thrus including all of the Sierra, *Bard's Tale*, and *Ultima* games. Also included is help for *Wasteland*, *Pool of Radiance*, and *Zak Mckraken*. How about over 25 maps for games like *Bard's Tale II*, *Battle Tech*, and *Sentinal World*. As an **Added Bonus**, we have included 5 game enhancers for *Starflight*, *Bard's Tale*, *Ultima*, and *Sentinal World*. These programs will allow you to change almost any character stats and game stats. This four disk set will be the answer to most of your adventure game questions! All of this for $19.95 plus $2.00 shipping.

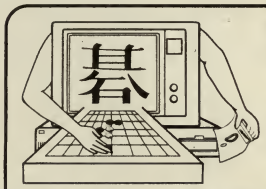
ELKON ENTERPRISES
4654 MILTLETOE
WICHITA FALLS, TX 76310

WIN LOTTO MILLIONS!

LOTTO PICKER 3™

New DOS Release!

LOTTO PICKER 3 picks your winning lotto tickets by finding hidden biases from past drawings! Join our DOCUMENTED WINNERS who exploit hot, due, & unbiased numbers in order to win big, and often, at Lotto. Works for all lotteries. **WHEELING** now included in DOS version! $39.95 (+ $2.55 s/h). 3.5" add $5.00. Version 2.1 for Apple II & C64/128. **GE RIDGE**, 170 Broadway, #201GG, NYC 10038. **ORDERS 1-800-634-5463 ext. 293.** Info 718-317-1961. New York residents add tax.



Prepare to meet your NEMESIS™

The only Go program to successfully imitate human play.

Go has been a way of life in the Orient for over 4,000 years. As much a philosophy as it is a game, Go is considered by many to be the secret of Japanese success.

"While chess is a game of war, Go is a game of market share." (Pres. Nikko Hotels)

"I've had a blast playing (and learning to play) this incredible game. The beauty of it is that NEMESIS helps" G. Entsminger, MicroCornucopia #46

"the leading Go game for the Macintosh (or ... the IBM PC, for that matter)...Using it is an improvement over learning the game from books or from all but the most patient humans." "This is without question one of the most extraordinary automated aids to go instruction developed." Charles Seiter, MacWorld 6/89

Toyogo, Inc. (617) 861-0488
76 Bedford Street, Suite 34-L, Lexington, MA 02173 **$79** Go Master, **$49** Joseki Tutor, **$59** Tactical Wizard + **$6** S&H

DEFINITIVE game collection.

1,079 carts for nine systems; rare accessories, memorabilia. $32,370.

William Sommerwerck
A207 4257 148th Ave., N.E.
Bellevue, WA 98007

MARKETPLACE

Classified and small space Display advertisers can now take advantage of the targeted and highly enthusiastic Game Player's audience at reasonable rates.

Display Classified rates
$125 per column inch

Call Bonnie Black at (201)703-9500 for more information.

ACTION STATIONS! NAVAL SURFACE COMBAT TACTICAL SIMULATION 1922 - 1945

A COMPUTER WARGAME ...the type of simulation used at the Naval War College for training and tactical analysis.

"....players who seek true authenticity will treasure it as a masterpiece." – Game Player's PC Strategy Guide

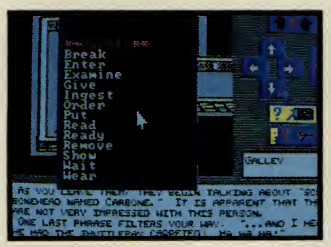
5-1/4", CGA, DOS 2.1+, 640k, 4 disks, 160 pg manual **$49.95** (tax, s/h incl.)

Conflict Analytics-N 119-2 Norfolk Rd NAS Alameda CA 94501 415-865-6966

led to increasing strain — even war — in your Local Group. Your job is to travel to the HomeCluster and discover what has happened.

There are several complications along the way. One is a traitor on your ship. Another is the loss of an important diplomatic member of your expedition. And it seems you've lost your mission orders along with practically everything else you carry. The future's looking pretty grim when you find yourself landing in a deserted city on the planet Ambergris. But don't expect things to improve.

Before you leave your chambers, move to your wall safe to extract several important items: three documents relating to your mission, a personal letter, and a security card. Then it's off for a look around your ship.

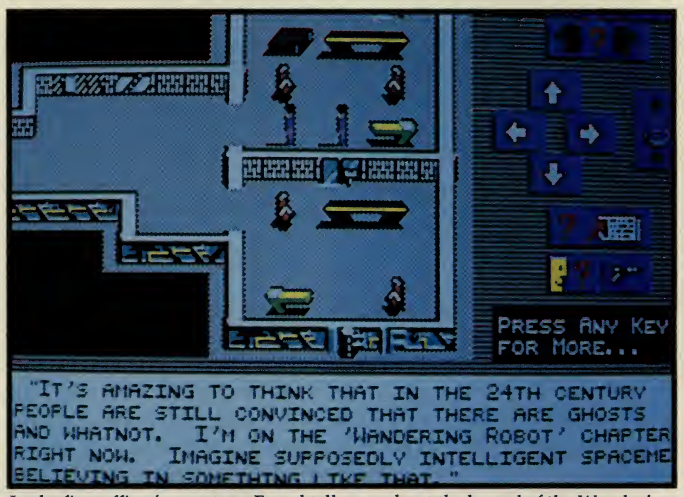


The verb list shows a number of actions you can take. Either click on a verb with the mouse or press the first letter in the word. You need the verb list to wear clothes or eat.

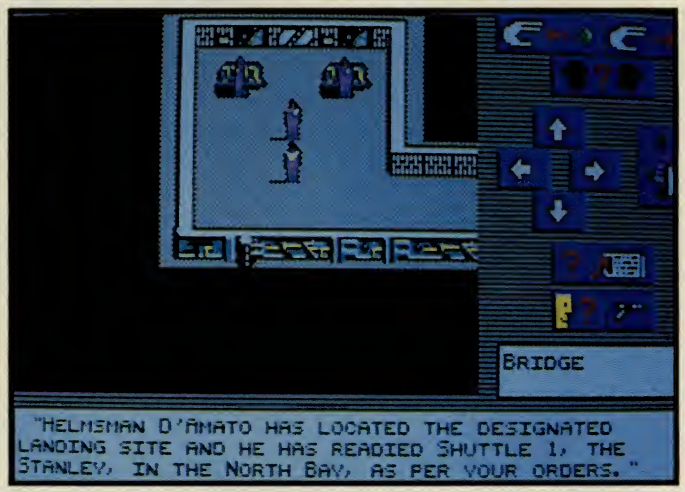
On each floor and in every chamber, you discover something new. When you eventually find a space shuttle, launch it and descend to Ambergris. Things are no better on Ambergris than they were on your ship. Before you leave, you're mugged, robbed, and set adrift. The only way to get back on board is through your resourcefulness.

ALEX G. SEWARD, CLUE HUNTER

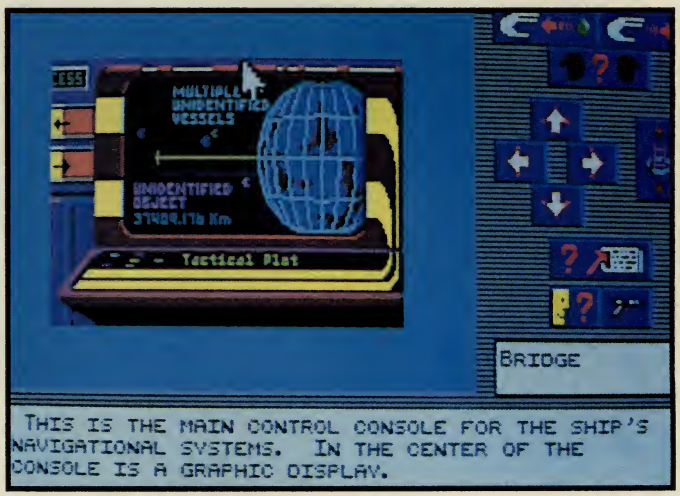
You should know from the start that there are some things that are going to happen — and there's nothing you can



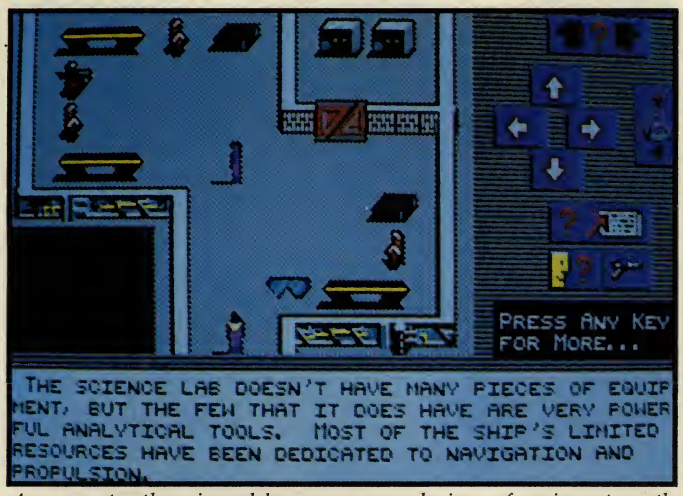
In the first officer's quarters, Fostol tells you about the legend of the Wandering Robot. You'll meet this robot later in the game. Remember "Lost in Space"?



Your ship's bridge is small, but the entire ship is controlled from here. Your second officer reports on the shuttle's readiness, but he is also aware of the problems in the drive bay.

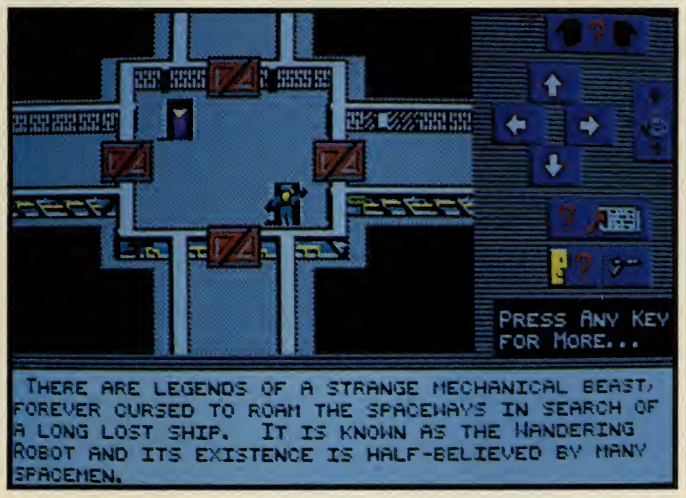


By zooming in on the main control console in the bridge area, you get a sense of the scope of your mission. Click on the tactical plot and receive additional information.



As you enter the science lab, you see several pieces of equipment worth examining. To your right and just in front of you are the U-V goggles. Take them as well as the other items available here.

You need the security card to open the door and get the trade iridium. Press "V" for the list of verbs, then select "Put." Several screens later, a screen gives you a chance to click on "Card Slot." That will open the door.

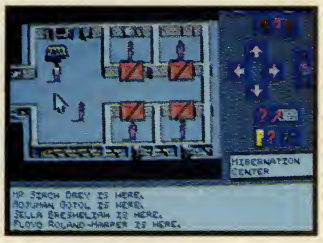


The Wandering Robot appears! In the hub of the shuttle deck, it stands on one ladderway while you stand on another. The text box tells the legend of Mr. Smith and this poor creature.

do about it. For example, a crew member is going to die right at the beginning of the game. You're also going to lose all your valuables in a robbery on a boat. Don't get frustrated or expend energy trying to stop these events. Instead, just let them happen, and move on.

But you can make your life easier by inspecting or talking to every person you meet, and zooming in on every item you find. You won't always be allowed to zoom in, but when you can, the item is almost always important. You won't get by the drive bay problem or the Quark-a-Cola puzzle without zooming in, just as you won't be able to launch the shuttle without talking to a crew member.

Before you can fly down to the planet Ambergris, you'll have to figure out how to launch your space shuttle. Ordinarily, this would be no trouble, but there's an intruder in the drive bay. Treat this problem as a two-part puzzle. First, dispose of the intruder by going to the drive bay. Keep in mind what happens when a hole is punched into the side of a 747 aircraft—just don't get sucked out yourself.



In the Hibernation Center, your four comrades wait to be awakened. One will die, and there's nothing you can do about it. Your task here is to awaken as many as you can. Without them, you can't launch the shuttle.

Once the intruder is out of the picture, head for the bridge and talk to the officers. Remember that you're in charge, and people follow you wherever you want them to.

Your situation isn't much improved when you land on

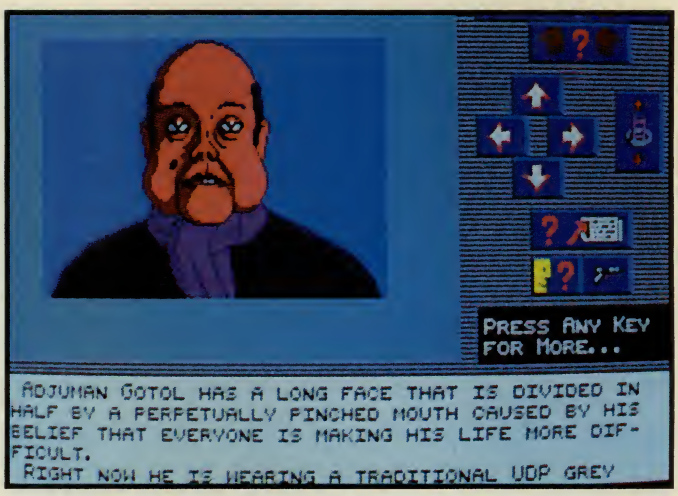
Ambergris. You're stuck in the isolation area, and there's only one way out. It's a tricky maneuver, but as you probably suspected, it involves the jammed door. What you're looking for is a highly volatile substance to melt down the door's outline. Check around nearby.

Once you're finally out of the isolation area, you're free to trek around Ambergris. There's a deserted city not too far away, but before you get to it, try going off the road and seeing what you can find. It could be that there's a valuable tool just waiting for you. Then see what you can do about removing a jammed credit card from a machine in the city before you make your way into the subway.

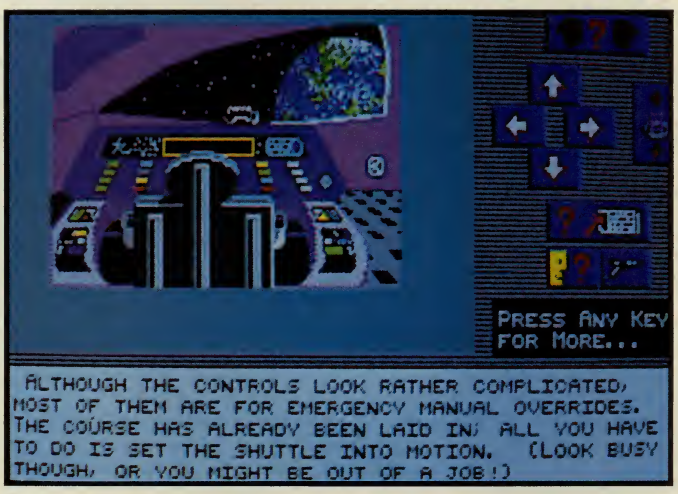
INNERSPACE INTERFACE

Universe 3's interface is well thought out. You can use the keyboard, a mouse, or, in fact, a combination of both. The function keys and icons control such activities as saving, closing, and loading games, as well as setting the game in animation or non-animation mode (the latter runs much faster). By selecting the right key or clicking appropriately, you can change the direction the character is facing, open and close doors, trace a path around the room, and change levels when you are standing on a ladder. You can also pick up and drop objects.

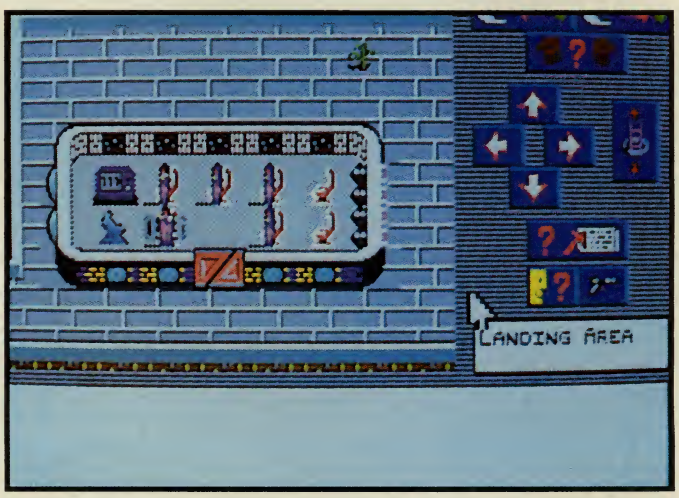
By pressing "V," you retrieve a list of verbs you can use to interact with objects and characters. From here you can



You were warned about Gotol in your personal note. He's the bad guy of the party. Knowing that won't help you much, though — he'll cause trouble anyway.



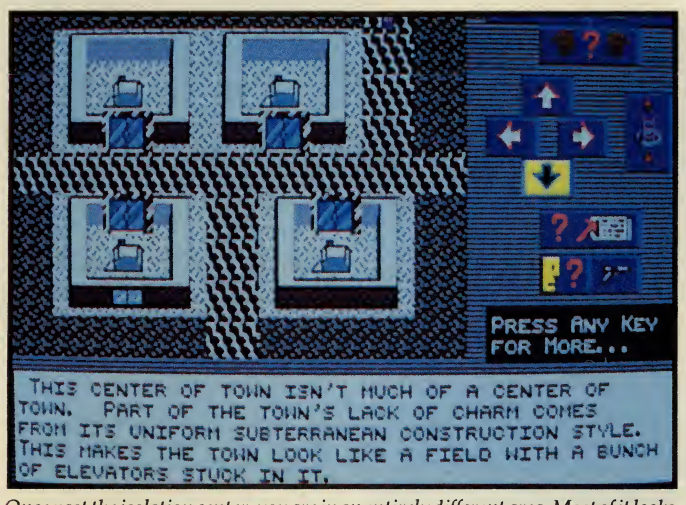
The controls of the space shuttle are actually quite easy to use. Before you can take off, though, you have to wake up your comrades and defeat the intruder in the drive bay.



When you're inside the shuttle after landing on the planet's surface, why not zoom in on the weapons case to see if there's anything that might prove helpful? It may not help you right away, but eventually....

As in other places in the game, the text box provides important clues. Here, Floyd suggests that tampering has taken place. He's right, of course, just as he's right about a number of things.

The only way into the radiation room is to use something capable of eating through the rubber-like seals. Why not have a drink and think about it? Maybe things will go better after a little attitude adjustment.



Once past the isolation center, you are in an entirely different area. Most of it looks like a ghost town. Your only way out is via a subway, but this takes considerable effort.

insert cards into slots, converse with characters, drink or eat things, and wear objects or take them off.

You will quickly realize that correct use of the verb list is essential to getting through even the first part of the game—and you'll also discover that figuring it out can be frustrating. At times it seems that you can't quite make the right move, no matter how often you try. Just as often, the right move comes only after considerable trial and error.

The zoom command is an important feature. You can highlight any object in your current room, but you can't always use the objects until you zoom in on them. By zooming (press Z or the mouse button), a closeup of the object is displayed. Sometimes you can even get a further closeup.

Often, the closeup shows a feature not apparent in the un-zoomed view. You must, for example, zoom in on the safe in your quarters in order to retrieve the documents, and you must zoom in on the bay door control in the cargo bay to rid the ship of its unwanted intruder.

In some places, *Universe 3* seems needlessly difficult. But in others, it demonstrates some very real strengths. Its interface is good, and its graphics, while not stunning, capture the spirit of the story. Most importantly, the designers have shown that it is possible to issue a sequel without slavishly reusing the original game system.

GP

Be sure to get all your business done as soon as possible while you're in Starport. Search nearby planets for goods to sell so that you can outfit your ship as completely as possible.

Starflight 2: Trade Routes of the Cloud Nebula

GARY MEREDITH

Once upon a time, back in **Electronic Arts'** first *Starflight*, all galactic commerce was based on the value and utility of endurium. It was a fuel, a building material — even the currency of the universe. Then a wave of solar eruptions and supernovas was linked to endurium, and it was banned for use on your home planet Arth and for the rest of known civilization. (Unfortunately, unknown civilization doesn't recognize Arth as a final authority on much of anything.) Everyone in the Federation is toeing the line.

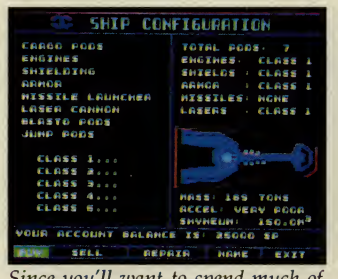
In *Starflight 2*, shyneum has taken endurium's place, but it's already getting harder to find. And when you do find it, you can bet that your claim will be contested by numerous other entrepreneurs, some of whom aren't above using force to get what they want.

Another complication is the persistent rumor that the vile and disgusting Spemin are in the celestial neighborhood again. Many years ago, those weasels seemed to be everywhere, but they were mostly just an irritant. Even a moderately armed starship with a bold commander could send them scurrying.

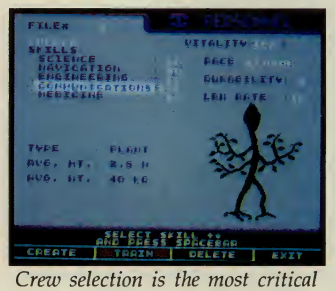
But somehow and somewhere, they've managed to get their slimy pseudopods on some really advanced technology. It appears that they're no longer scared into running. And there's *nothing* worse than a Spemin who knows it has the upper flagellum.

With their new-found technology — and their accompanying arrogance — the Spemin certainly subscribe to the "shoot first and don't ask any questions" philosophy of interstellar relations, as do the G'Nunk, the Leghk (in the past), and sometimes the Ng-Kher-Arla.

All in all, times have probably been better for venturing out into the universe to make your fortune. But, on the other hand, if you can manage to find the mother lode of shyneum *and* relieve the Spemin of their technological goodies, you'll be able to retire for at least two or three millennia.

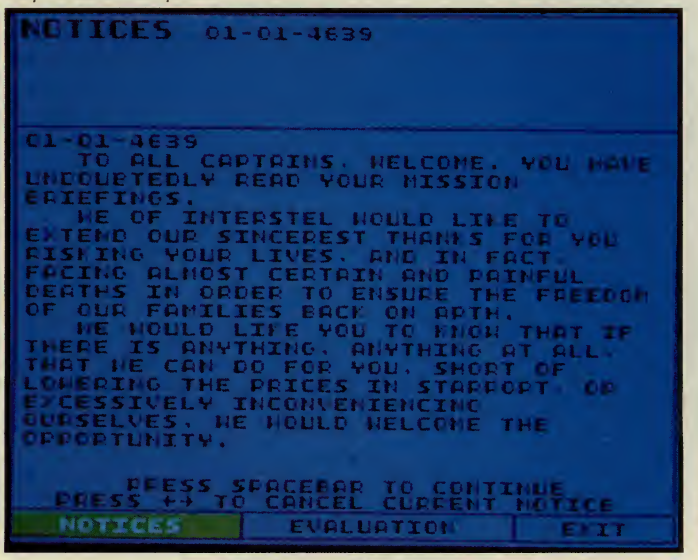


Since you'll want to spend much of your budget on crew training, try to get by with minimum armament until you can acquire some goods to sell. Upgrade your engines one step and leave the rest alone for now.



Crew selection is the most critical part of outfitting your ship. The Elowan make great communications officers, but they are fragile and some other species won't work with them.

It's a good idea to catch up on all the latest information each time you visit Starport. Often these messages can give you flux locations or warn you away from suspected trouble spots.



AND DON'T FORGET TO KICK THE TIRES

You're on a tight budget when you first outfit your ship, so compromises must be made. Other than upgrading your

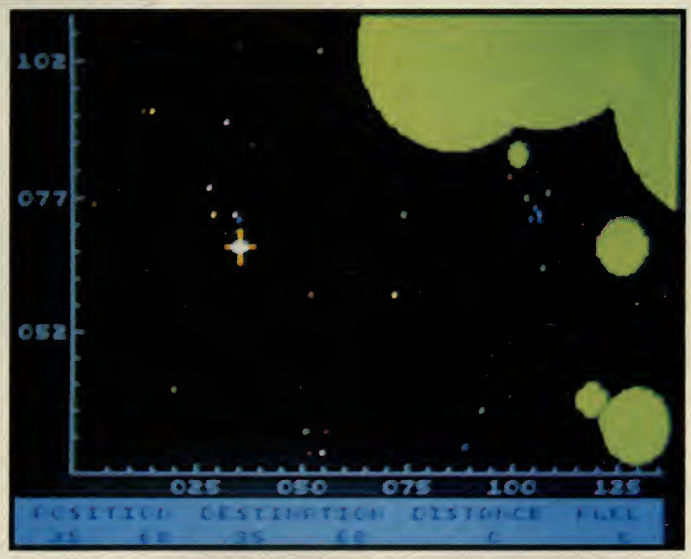
Always keep notes on the coordinates for different planetary systems. It's especially important to note flux locations, as well as the position of the Arth Starport.

engines to Class 2 and perhaps adding a few more cargo pods, you should probably leave everything else alone. If you have a good communications officer, you won't have to worry so much about offensive and defensive capabilities at first.

But once you do get a little spare change, you should think about upgrading your lasers and your shields. Shields won't help you in a nebula cloud, but otherwise they're more effective than plain armor. And even if they do consume energy when up, they can also be repaired when damaged. If your armor is damaged, your only recourse is to buy more.

There are a couple new additions to ship systems in *Starflight* 2. Blasto pods are amazingly powerful (and amazingly expensive) torpedoes that can devastate just about any unfriendlies you might meet. You can only carry two at a time in your cargo hold, but that's plenty, considering the power of these babies.

A jump pod is also a handy item to have in your inventory. Back in the days of the original *Starflight*, you could either travel in normal hyperspace or take a short cut through one of the many fluxes located throughout the galaxy. With a flux, you could jump rapidly from one place to another, saving time and fuel. The only problem was that the fluxes weren't always conveniently positioned.



The star map is a handy item for planning trips. It displays exact coordinates for stars and computes your energy expenditures for the trip. It also helps you avoid nebulae—at least until you can afford heavier armor.

Information on the star is displayed when you enter a solar system. Planets are color-coded for size and temperature, so you can easily find which ones may be inhabited or on which ones you can safely land.

A jump pod creates its own flux — anywhere and anytime. Of course, there's no guarantee where you'll end up, but hey — everything's a gamble. You can carry up to four jump pods, and in many ways they're more useful than the blasto pods.

After getting your ship and outfitting it as best you can with the meager supplement the Federation has given you, it's time to find a crew. The more you spend on the ship, the less you can afford for training, so it's a good idea to go with the minimum armaments at first and hope everyone you meet is friendly.

Sensor readings can give you valuable information, especially if you're concentrating on finding planets suitable for colonization. This one looks pretty good, but unfortunately, it's already inhabited.

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE?

A great way to insure friendliness is to spend top dollar (or Shyneum Penny) on your communications officer. A lot of misunderstandings and laser fire can be avoided by knowing what a new acquaintance is trying to say. Even though the Eshvey, the Eshvara, and the Humna Humna are basically friendly, a linguistic faux pas can quickly get you on their bad sides. And if you can't trade with other species in *Starflight* 2, you might as well turn off the computer and find a good book to read.

The software police can pop up at any time — usually at the most inconvenient moment. If you just stay cool and cooperate with them, everything will be okay.

The Elowan make excellent communications officers because of their high learning rate and good interpersonal skills. They even double as good doctors. The Elowan are, however, fragile creatures, easily injured by even a mild thunderstorm. And you must consider that some species, such as the Veloxi, don't like the Elowan. You'd better think it over carefully before putting the two species together in your crew.

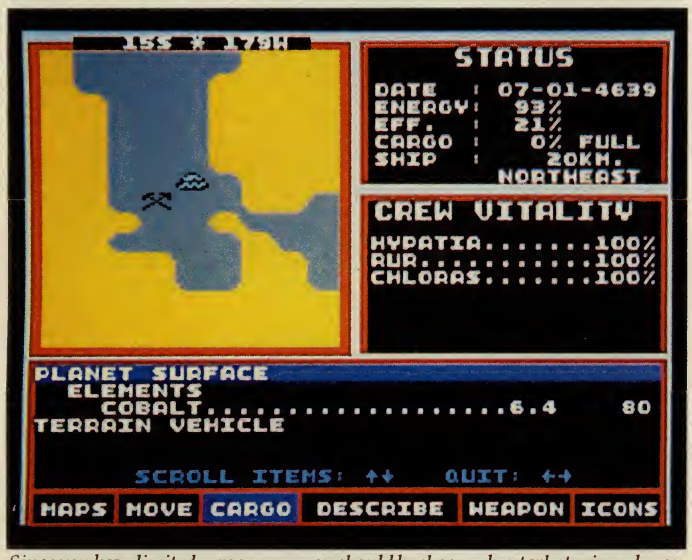
The Thrynn are also good communicators, and they *do* get along with the Veloxi, so that combination might make for better crew harmony. But there are those who would tell you that, as a whole, you cannot entirely trust the Thrynn. That's something you'll have to discover for yourself.

Naturally, a communications officer can't handle everything in an encounter. It will be up to you to decide what posture you'll want to take in dealing with certain species. Most of the time, it pays to be friendly. But some species — such as the G'Nunk — view friendliness as a sign of weakness. If you've got sufficient firepower (and it really doesn't take much to intimidate the G'Nunk), a hostile posture is preferable in such dealings.

A word of caution, however. *Don't* try hostility with the Spemin. Their ships may be the same interstellar garbage scows, but their new weapons give them the edge. If the Spemin get the drop on you, try being obsequious to buy some time. Obviously,

Prepare to be confused. You are now orbiting the home planet of the Tandelou Eshvey — definitely not to be confused with the Tandelou Eshvara. Use a friendly posture and just say no when they ask you about any god masks.

The Eshvey consider it entirely proper to mix religion into everything, including trade. When selling something to them, try doubling their counter offer, then working down. The opposite goes when you're buying.



Since you have limited cargo space, you should be choosy about what minerals you pick up. It's a good idea to have a little of everything, but a unit of mercury is still worth about six times as much as this cobalt.

posture is an important facet of any dealings. The prime consideration, though, is finding a good communicator for your exploration and trade.

Trade is what makes the galaxy go 'round. You must

Keep a sharp eye out for any beasties roving about on a planet's surface. This planet seems clear, but some (such as the Dweenle worlds) are full of dangerous lifeforms.

visit other planets to acquire items for trade, but that's only the beginning. A little creative horse trading will take you a long way. Unlike the original *Starflight*, where everything had a fixed value and you did most of your trading at the starport, now most trading is done with aliens who have some really strange ideas about price structuring and fair market value.

When you deal at a trading center, all goods are priced with a percentage of the standard value. If an item is in big demand, you may be able to get well above the standard price. But if there's a surplus, you'll be lucky to receive 70 percent of the market value — that is, if anyone will buy it at all.

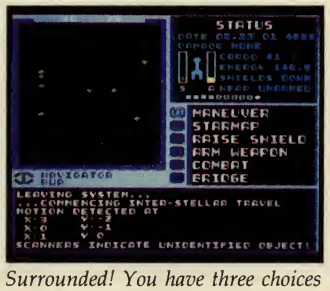
Shyneum and endurium are almost always highly valued, while lesser minerals may fluctuate wildly from market to market and from minute to minute. Artifact prices vary the most, since they depend on whatever their religious significance is. This is especially true of the two Tandelou factions, both of whom pay big bucks for god masks. Something else to consider is that the trading of information can also be very lucrative — and enlightening.

Beyond trading, planet survey and mining are important vocations for your crew. Recommending planets suitable for colonization is an effective way to pad your bank account. Just be certain that all the environmental parameters are within specifications, and that the planet isn't already inhabited by sentient beings of any kind. A colonization recommendation that doesn't pan out results in a fine from the Federation that could put you out of business permanently.

The actual mechanics of ship management, navigation, and maneuvering are little changed from the original *Starflight*. The various crew stations and their sub-directories are all laid out for efficient operation — a big help when you discover that the alien ships surrounding you have answered your friendly hail with a spread of missiles.

The water and atmosphere are all right on this planet for a landing, but the gravity is too low, so the atmosphere is thinner than acceptable for colonization. It looks like a good planet to mine, though.

The ability to shift quickly from communications to navigation or weaponry is indeed a lifesaver. The sensors are also easy to use and give a bit more info than before. Now you don't have to actually *visit* a planet's surface in order to establish the presence of civilization, or that colony's level.



Surrounded! You have three choices — fight, run, or talk. Always try talking first, especially this close to home. Just be ready to run. But don't raise your shields, since that could be interpreted as an aggressive action.

TIME ENOUGH AT LAST

Aside from the greater variety of alien encounters in *Starflight* 2, there's also the added challenge of time travel. You first have to find the singularity that will drop you back about 1000 millennia, but once you find out why you're going into the past, finding the singularity will be simple. If you're really stuck, try getting a Dweenle to talk. Just offer him a few juicy nidberries. These guys are usually on the low side of terminally depressed, but the nidberries should get you past their overwhelmingly self-obsessed mien.

Careful questioning of the Humna Humna might reveal information concerning time travel as well. If you manage to find the *right* Humna Humna, he'll tell you about a special flux node that puts you fairly close to the anomaly where time travel is possible. This saves time and solves the problem of crossing one of the nebula clouds. But unless your ship is armed to the teeth, you'll want to avoid venturing into the clouds. Sometimes it can't be helped, but the rule to remember is get in and get out as fast as you can.

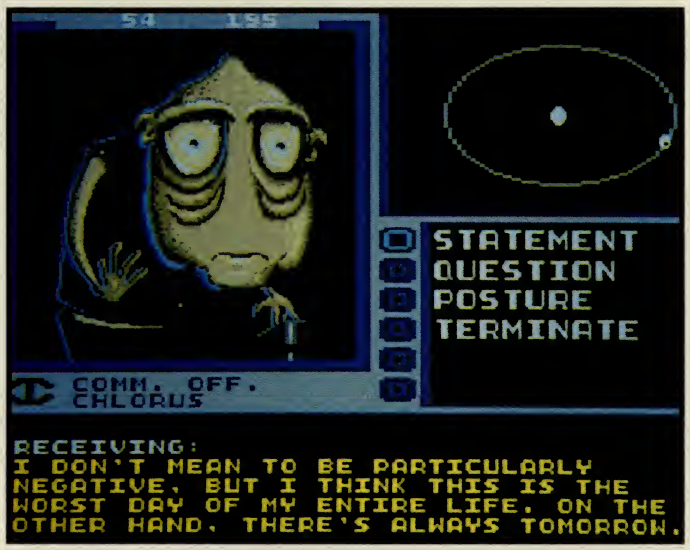
Do you know me? Here we have the other half of the act, the Eshvara. You'll be interested to discover that they're every bit as obnoxiously self-righteous as the Eshvey. If they ask, by the way, you don't know the Eshvey.

Finally, whenever venturing into any anomaly — especially the Humna Humnas'— be sure that your shields are up. It's a rough ride, and no shields quickly means no hull. Of course, shields use extra energy, so be sure you have plenty of fuel before setting out. Count on using about 50 cubic meters for a one-way trip. Obviously, time travel is not something you want to attempt until you're operating well above the subsistence level. Especially since you may find it necessary to travel into the past more than once.

Starflight 2 is a wonderfully skewed combination of *Star Trek* and *Let's Make a Deal*. The grander scope and variety of this newest version should keep armchair starfarers busy for a long time. After all, there are over 500 planets and 30 alien races in your corner of the galaxy. That's enough permutations to entertain until the next *Starflight* adventure comes along.

GP

If you've gotten the impression that the Humna Humna consider themselves above the rest of creation, you're not far wrong. Still, they're relatively fair-minded and friendly. And they're not above demeaning themselves for a little monetary gain.



Dealing with the Dweenles can really be a downer. These guys know in their hearts that you hate them, and either want to destroy them or take advantage of them in trade. Don't be fooled, though — they can be tough bargainers.

Begin by selecting your samurai's name and clan. Symbols in the upper left denote the various resources found in each province.

Sword of the Samurai Comes out Swinging!

WILLIAM R. TROTTER

Game players who enjoyed Koei's *Nobunaga's Ambition* will be familiar already with the historic milieu of **MicroProse's** new *Sword of the Samurai*: Japan in the 16th century. A land fragmented into turbulent fiefdoms, a feudal system dominated by a powerful warrior caste — the samurai. The fierce code of honor and legendary feats of arms of the soldiers, diplomats, statesmen (even, on occasion, poets and philosophers) during this troubled time makes them all larger than life.

In *Nobunaga's Ambition*, Koei's game designers give equal weight to the political, economic, moral, and military aspects of leadership. By contrast, in *Sword of the Samurai*, MicroProse has concentrated on heroic role playing. And although plenty of diplomatic nuances are built in, they are more often than not personal rather than governmental in nature.

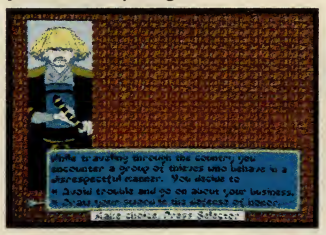
Sword of the Samurai treats one-on-one duels in a realistic manner, and often puts you into one of those wild one-man-against-a-hundred melees that were a trademark of all the great samurai movies.

Thankfully, the game doesn't stoop to the witless chop-socky that characterizes a host of mediocre martial arts games. Indeed, if you wish to succeed in *Sword of the Samurai*, you must not only become a master swordsman, but also a thoughtful and seasoned strategist.

As the youngest retainer, you start off with the lowest possible prestige.

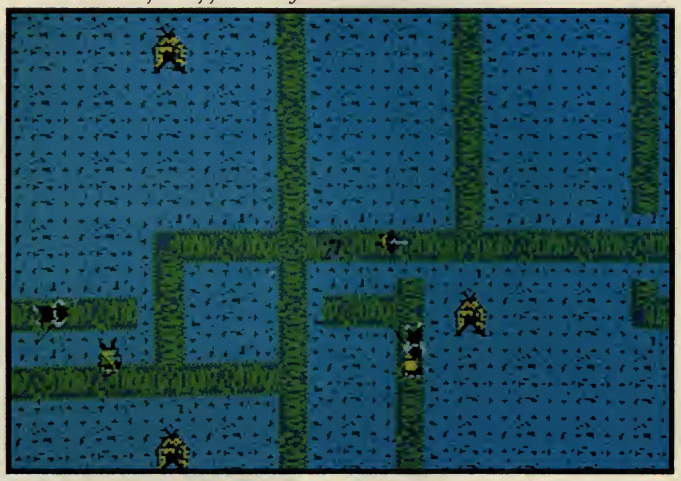
You can check status screens at any time to see how your rivals within your clan are faring.

Donating a parcel of land to the local Buddhist temple is a good way to impress the hatamoto *early in the game.*



Even on casual journeys, you'll meet plenty of troublemakers. There is only one honorable thing you can do in this situation — draw steel.

If you're attacked in the rice paddies, stand where the paths intersect so you'll have the clearest field of fire with your bow.

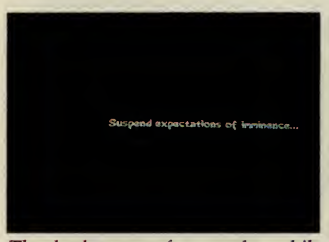


You begin by selecting a clan to belong to and a *hatamoto* (baron) to serve. There are several other samurai in similar service, and each has his own personal agenda for self-advancement. Friendships are possible, but treachery is more likely. In the early stages of the game, you must concentrate on winning the *hatamoto*'s favor through acts of loyalty, honor, and courage.

If you become sufficiently prominent and respected, the *daimyo* (duke) may promote you to the rank of *hatamoto* when the current baron dies. If you distinguish yourself in that position, the supreme warlord, the *shogun*, may in turn raise you to the rank of *daimyo* when *that* post becomes vacant.

CLIMBING THE LADDER OF SUCCESS

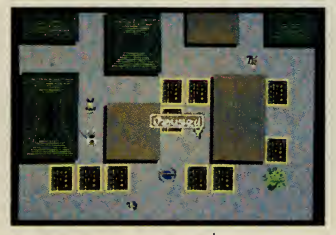
If you're a *daimyo*, the game opens up a whole new realm of possibilities. You then command not just a band of retainers, but also a powerful army comprised of archers, cavalry, and musketeers in addition to the dogged foot-soldiers with whom you started. The inevitable temptation arises: *Someone* has to be



The dead spaces of game play while the computer loads the next scenes are enlivened by amusing homilies — another nice touch.

the *shogun*, the supreme generalissimo — why not you?

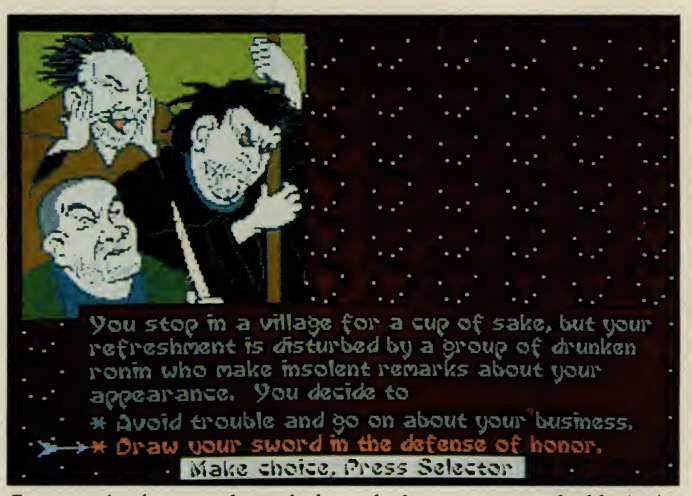
As you ascend in rank and power, the game provides a delectable smorgasbord of incidents, encounters, campaigns, and miniature quests. For example, perhaps a band of drunken *ronin* insults you at a tavern. Honor demands that you slay them — all 16 of them (and watch out for the guys with spears!). Or your betrothed is kidnapped, and you must infiltrate an enemy's castle to rescue her. Or perhaps the *daimyo* sends you to retrieve a priceless scroll from some brigands.



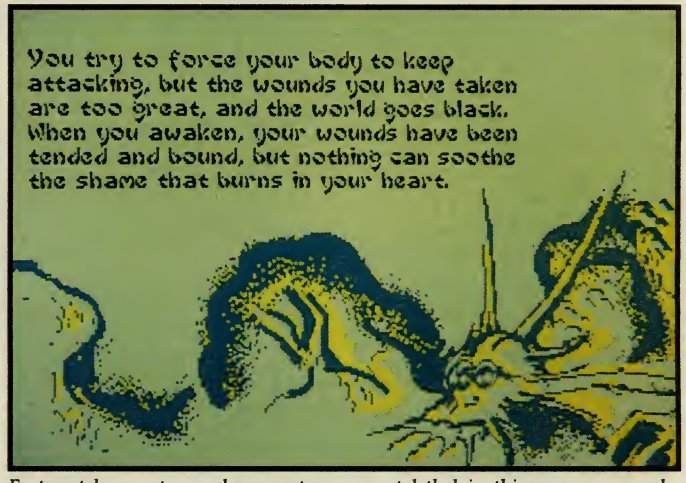
When brawling in a village, remember that crossing walls, bushes, and gardens slows you down. The same obstacles also slow down your assailants.

Maybe a spy informs you that a rival samurai has dispatched a hit squad of ninjas to fillet you in bed. And if a truly great dishonor comes to you (Don't kid yourself. At some point in the game, you'll be tempted to do something that falls under that category), you may be compelled to obey the *shogun's* edict and commit *sepukku* — ritual suicide.

Nearly every time you



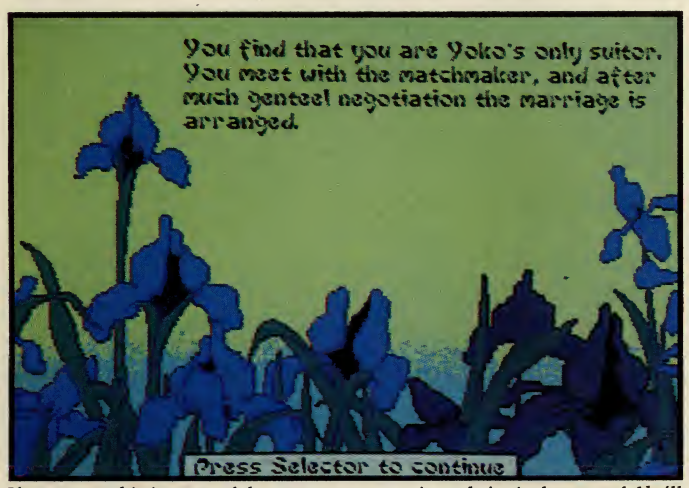
Even stopping for a casual cup of sake can be dangerous to your health. Again, honor demands that you thrash these dogs mercilessly.



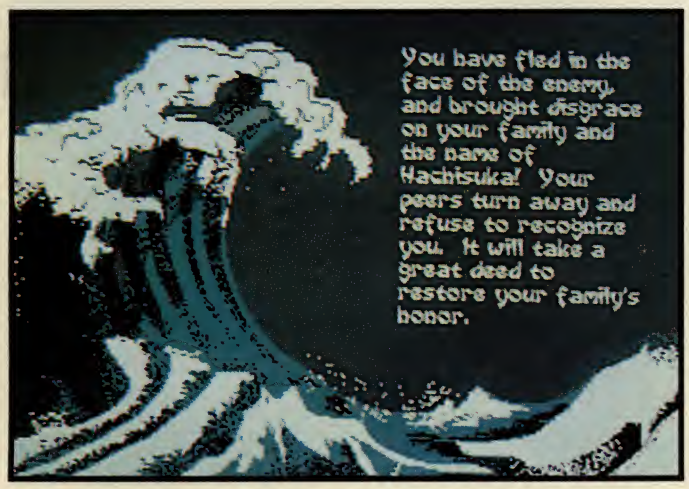
Fortunately, most casual encounters are not lethal in this game — merely humiliating.

You'll make numerous trips to the lord's castle. Enter boldly — unless, of course, you've come to murder him in his sleep.

Various opportunities await you in court. As a virile, unattached young fellow, you may wish to seek a comely wife — if one will have you.



If your courtship is successful, you may soon acquire an heir. And very useful he'll be, too, should you require avenging.



If you should run away from a fight, or even accidentally exit the battle screen, great will be your dishonor.

Journeys are depicted on this type of map. Your animated samurai travels much more slowly while crossing rivers or mountains than when walking on the plains.

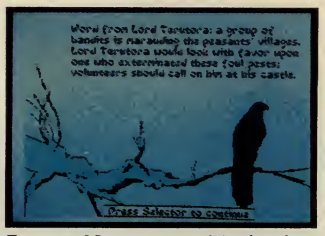
venture into the countryside, you encounter brigands and renegades. Sometimes these meetings take the form of one-on-one duels, and sometimes they are free-for-all melees. Before each battle begins, you are given the option of ignoring the challenge and continuing on about your own business, or drawing your sword and getting right down to it.

Given this game's strong emphasis on personal honor, your first instinct will probably be to take on all comers each time you're challenged. And to be sure, as long as you win more encounters than you lose, such single-minded bellicosity slowly but surely increases your stature — though it slows down the game considerably as well.

But, on the other hand, you'll rise much faster if you and your troops are the first contingent to arrive at the *hatamoto's* castle when he sends out a request for aid. If you delay your response just so you can thrash a band of common

When you're in court, hunt for good deeds waiting to be done. You know, priests to be rescued, that sort of thing. The lord certainly would notice honorable acts performed right under his nose.

Even the incidental plot details in Sword of the Samurai *are rendered with exquisite sensitivity to color and mood.*

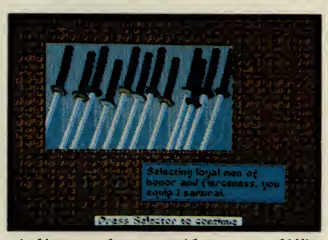


Fear not: New opportunities for glory and honor will soon manifest themselves.

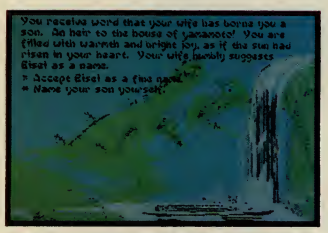
ruffians, some other samurai is sure to beat you to the palace and hog all the glory.

Sometimes, therefore, it's best to swallow your pride and press on, ignoring the casual affronts of louts and cutpurses. Besides, you can always come back and eviscerate them after you've taken care of the baron's business.

One serious bug in the melee scenes was noted in the early shipments of this game. After you become *hatamoto*, you still have to fight melees in villages and rice paddies. In these early shipments, something happened in the rice paddy scenes that caused the program to crash, replacing the lovely graphics with a set of meaningless, flickering vertical bars. *If this happens,* call MicroProse, and they will ship you a supplementary disk that corrects the problem. The bug will be corrected in later shipments.



A disgraced samurai has great difficulty recruiting additional troops.

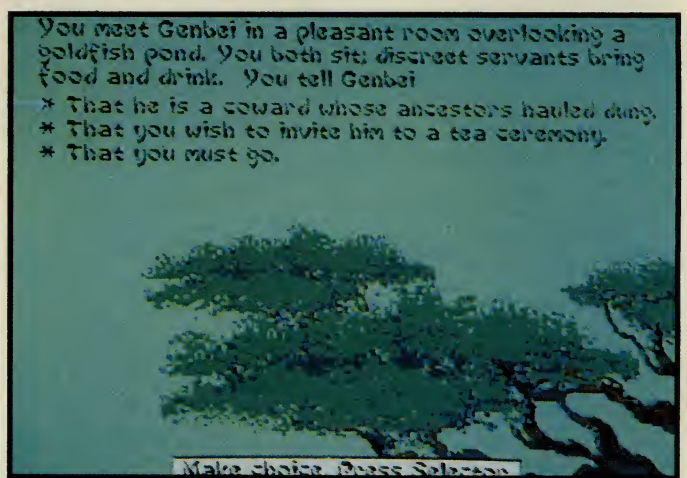


As you embark on your campaign, good news arrives by messenger.

READY FOR THE BATTLE SCENE, MR. DEMILLE

In big-scale battles, *Sword of the Samurai* makes literal what *Nobunaga's Ambition* made abstract and chess-like, but it does so with no less elegance. Armies are viewed from above, deployed on realistic and handsomely rendered terrain. The system of command and control is very easy and logical to grasp, but it can be as subtle as all get-out in practice, and sometimes just as vulnerable to bad luck.

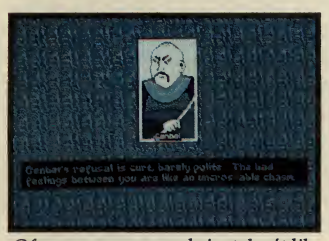
After a battle begins, army



Once back in court, you may find it prudent to do a little politicking. The first of these options is not recommended under ordinary circumstances.

Rebels come in all varieties. Here's a chance to redeem your honor with an easy victory.

formations are controlled by a small icon shaped like a traditional Japanese war fan. Move your unit by positioning the fan over its destination, click



Of course, some people just don't like tea ceremonies. Next time, you may as well insult him.

to determine whether the unit will march without turning, or turn while marching, then watch what happens. It's a quick, intuitive system, realistically modified by terrain, foliage, and the effects of enemy fire.

You can initiate battle with several basic attack or defense formations. Each has a picturesque and descriptive name ("The Crane's Wing," "The Arrowhead," and so on). You must select the appropriate formation based on the terrain and your reading of the enemy general's intentions.

All the battle scenes — most especially the castle, village, and rice paddy melees — have the look and texture of those classic swashbuckling fights staged by Akira Kurosawa in his samurai films. That is to say they are some of the most vivid and viscerally exciting scenes to be found in any role-playing game.

For all its epic dimensions, *Sword of the Samurai* is miraculously easy to get into. You can dive right into any of the practice scenarios without reading one page of the manual and instantly have a great time just by doing what comes instinctively. Only via the long role-playing scenarios, however, can you fully savor the depth and richness of the game.

As icing on the cake, MicroProse has lavished on this game some of the most breathtaking graphics ever to grace a PC game. Virtually every screen boasts an elegant composition in the style of the great Japanese woodblock artists, with imaginative, subtle colors. You'll find yourself pausing, time after time, just to savor the artistry that decorates this exceptional game.

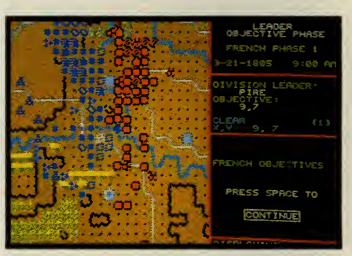
GP

Swordfighting with the joystick is smooth and instinctive. Try a side-cut if you see an opening.

When a fellow samurai is in trouble, you may go to his aid or not, depending on the circumstances. Some honor may be lost, however, by an outright snub.

BATTLES OF

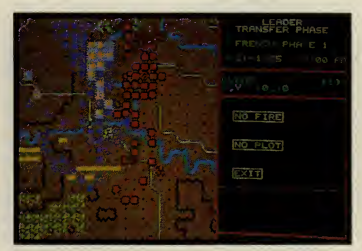
WILLIAM R. TROTTER



Maneuver and combat take place on large-scale sector maps, but you can hit the "other map" key at any time to see how this closeup relates to the battlefield as a whole.

It has taken nearly a year for **SSI's** award-winning *Battles of Napoleon* to appear in PC format, leaving personal computer users interested in simulations of smoothbore-era warfare restlessly reading the glowing reviews and accolades this program got in its other incarnations.

But the wait is over, and it was worth it. *Battles* offers a lot to any war gamer interested in Napoleonic simulations. Not only does it include richly detailed scenarios for Borodino, Auerstadt, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo, but also a powerful and meticulously thought-out construction program that lets you create maps and armies to wage imaginary campaigns (or to tinker with real history, whichever turns you on the most).



The "transfer leader" screen shows you where each unit of a corps or division is located on the field. Unit integrity is vital, as is the physical proximity of regimental and divisional commanders.

The program also lets you generate random engagements without having to go through the construction set. Once you've replayed Waterloo from every angle you can think of, this random option keeps things fresh, game after game.

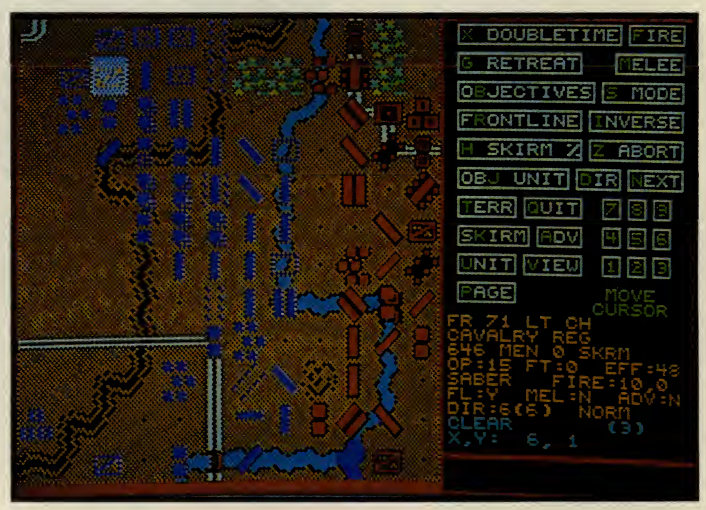
Even if the saber-and-musket game field were more crowded, SSI's system for reproducing that era's tactics would still be outstanding. Everything that could possibly influence a Napoleonic battle seems to have been factored in: terrain, unit formations, cumulative fatigue, morale, efficiency, leadership, and angles and ranges of fire.

There is a finely honed balance between the complexity necessary to *simulate* and the playability needed to make the simulation *enjoyable*. It is largely due to its effective balance that *Battles* really wins its marshal's baton. The gaming system is less tedious than that of *Universal Military Simulator* (and the artillery casualty figures are much more realistic!), and dramatically easier to use than the somewhat creaky "Battlefront" system.

You can't expect *Battles of Napoleon* to yield either its secrets or its multifaceted rewards without some work on your part. The documentation is dense and somewhat opaque (when *will* game companies realize that clear instructions are as important as good programming?). The manual could also use some visuals so that the beginner can make sure that what he sees on his screen is what he's supposed to see.

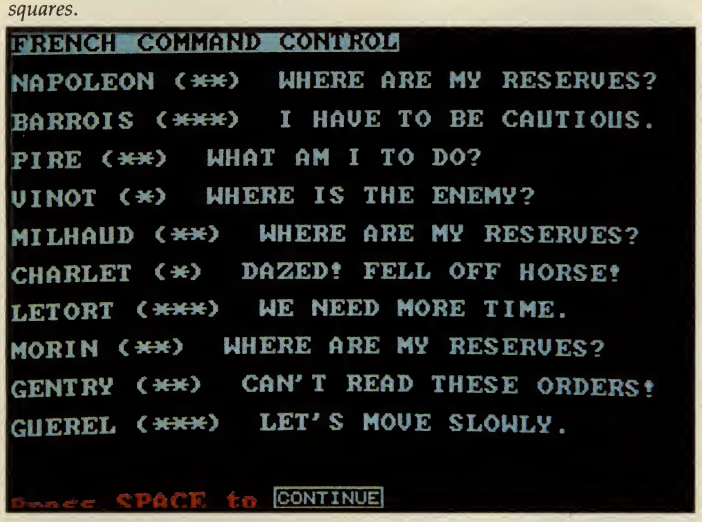
Yet, as daunting as the documentation may be on a quick read-through, most of the game system's commands and options make excellent sense as you actually struggle through your first scenario. Don't, however, expect to win those first few battles — the computer knows how to handle cavalry charges and command control procedures from the start, whereas most human players need to hack through several battles (with frequent references to the manual) before they get the hang of these things.

Perhaps the subtlest aspect of the program is that of "command control." In the years before electronics, when orders had to be delivered by hand or bellowed over the din of musketry, the physical proximity

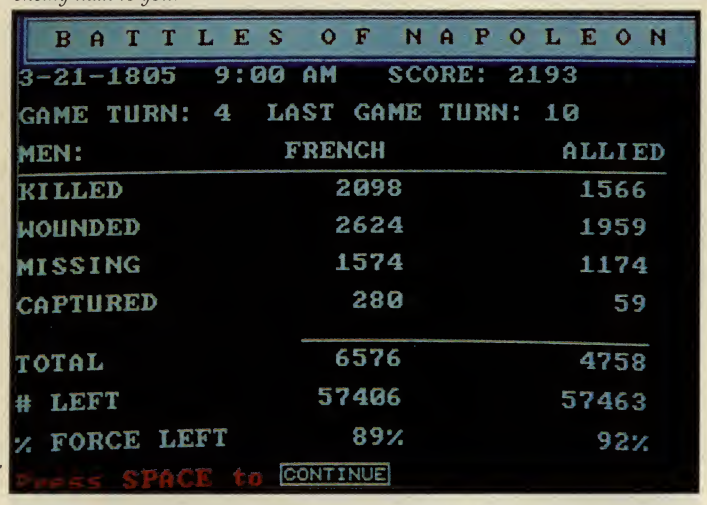


Battles's *command menus give you outstanding flexibility and realism. It may take several games, however, to learn how to get the most from your cavalry.*

Movement and firepower effectiveness depend on your formations and facing. At the least suspicion of an enemy cavalry charge, form the threatened infantry into squares.



The "command control" screens show you how each officer is rated. Four asterisks mean he is near perfect, while one asterisk means he may be more valuable to the enemy than to you.



At the end of each turn, the casualty figures are displayed for infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

of a commander to his troops — and the charisma and confidence that radiated from him — could make all the difference between a victory and a rout.

In *Battles*, each leader has his own rating, which in turn affects everything from melee strength to the speed with which orders are carried out and ammunition supplied. Before the movement and combat portions of each game turn, you have a chance to move leaders from stabilized spots to the places where they'll do the most good.

While battles can be won or lost by what you do or fail to do at this stage, the documentation is particularly muddy as to what exactly you must do in order to maximize "command control" within this particular game system. In general, you should try to keep your division commanders with their most hotly engaged regiments, and regiments grouped together within divisions. Beyond that, you just have to develop a feel for things as you play.

If you don't have EGA graphics, but you *do* have a color monitor, you may want to experiment with playing the game in shaded monochrome. The colors used in CGA mode are positively bilious. Not that the utilitarian EGA graphics are anything to invite your friends over to see, either, but at least they won't give you a migraine.

But any flaws in *Battles of Napoleon* fall by the wayside when you play this elegant and sophisticated system. The battles are utterly engrossing and appropriately bloody. Most of all, the simulation of Napoleonic tactics leaves nothing to be desired. *Battles* is a thoroughbred.

GP

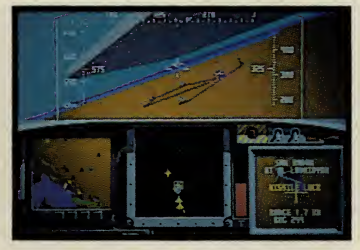
Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; EGA or CGA graphics.

F-15 STRIKE

RICHARD SHEFFIELD

If at first glance you think that *F-15 Strike Eagle II* looks similar to *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, you're absolutely right. The folks at **MicroProse** have taken their old bestseller, *F-15 Strike Eagle*, and added the three-dimensional graphics system from their award-winning *F-19* to create *F-15 II*. But don't be fooled into thinking that *F-15 II* is just an *F-19* clone. Though they may look alike, the game play is vastly different.

F-19 was a game of silent avoidance. In *F-15 II* the object isn't sneaking past the enemy. As a matter of fact, almost every enemy installation in the area already knows you're there. So as a Strike Eagle pilot, you just jut out your jaw and say, "Whaddaya gonna do about it?"



The director mode lets you know what is going on around you. Here, a SAM shoots off the rail. Better check your radar display.

Deciding to simulate the McDonnell Douglas F-15 Strike Eagle back in 1985 with the first *F-15* was a stroke of genius. Since the Strike Eagle was designed as both a dogfighter and a ground attack aircraft, a game based on it allows for both types of action-filled activities. All the *F-15 II* missions have primary and secondary ground targets which must be attacked through a swarm of enemy aircraft. This game *never* lacks action.

And you get into the action quickly. Unlike other MicroProse games, there are very few start-up screens to plow through before starting your first flight. As soon as your wheels leave the tarmac (or flight deck, since there are carrier-based missions, too), the mission is underway.

The uncluttered cockpit layout makes even the most difficult assignments as simple as possible. Three CRT (cathode ray tube) screens across the bottom keep you informed about your tactical situation with a radar display, a moving map, and an enhanced video image, called the TrackCam, of any target. Flight information is displayed on the HUD (heads up display), which is superimposed over the out-the-window view.

There are a number of keyboard commands used in *F-15 II*, but MicroProse decided against its usual keyboard overlay. Instead, the command list is kept as short as possible and mnemonic devices identify the keys. The "S" key, then, stands for short-range missile, the "M" key indicates medium range, and so on. Other commands are automatic. For example, if you choose an air-to-ground missile, the tracking system automatically switches to air-to-ground mode. Simplicity and ease of operation are paramount in this game.

There is a lot to see on the ground in F-15 II. As you approach this surface-to-air (SAM) site, note the spinning radar dish and the missile launchers.

F-15 II may be simple to operate, but there is no shortage of graphics flash. A number of different out-of-the-aircraft views allow you to see your aircraft from the side, your plane from a chase plane behind you, your plane and your target at the same time — you can even ride along on a sidewinder as it tracks and destroys an enemy aircraft.

One very entertaining bit of graphics fun in *F-15 II* is its "director mode," which enables you to get movie-style "cut shots" of action taking place outside your view. If an enemy aircraft takes off from a nearby

Heads up after takeoff! There's always a bogey in the area. But a quick sidewinder shot should take care of that little problem.

EAGLE II

Use the tactical view for a great shot of your F-15 closing in for the kill.

Keep an eye out all around. Don't let a bad guy sneak up on your six!

As you would expect with a MicroProse game, there are ranks to be gained and decorations to win. An outstanding mission will earn the Congressional Medal of Honor.

base or a surface-to-air missile springs to life, you get a closeup view of the action.

If the seven missions in the original *F-15 Strike Eagle* were not enough for you, you'll be pleased to know that there are now probably hundreds of different primary and secondary targets — and you'll rarely get the same mission twice. The action takes place over one of four international hot spots — Libya, the Persian Gulf, Vietnam, and the Middle East. The use of genuine targets and cities really adds to the realism and enjoyment.

As with most graphics-intensive games, the speed of the screen update can suffer if you're using a slow machine. To combat this, MicroProse lets the user adjust the level of ground detail to improve the screen speed as needed. The highest level of detail is certainly not required for a satisfying gaming session. The difficulty level can also be adjusted to fit novices and aces alike.

Overall, the air-to-air action in *F-15 II* is very good. Real air combat maneuvers yield good results and close-in gunfighting is a blast. But the air-to-ground portion of the game may be too easy for experienced gamers. The original version required skill to line up and time your bomb drops. *F-15 II* uses Maverick missiles which are simply pointed in the general direction of the target and fired. Your only challenge is getting close enough to use the missiles. And you still can't play head-to-head missions with a friend via a modem.

This updated *F-15 Strike Eagle* is a tight, well-done package. Though true realism may be lacking in certain elements, generally, compromises were made to improve the action and game play. After all, accessible dogfighting and fun is what *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is all about.

GP

Hardware requirements: 128K minimum memory; EGA or CGA graphics; joystick optional. Must boot from a 5 1/2" A drive.

THE FOOL'S

LESLIE MIZELL

The hidden letters are starting to appear in this puzzle. When you push the buttons at the bottom of the screen, keep the "H," shape while trying to uncover the other two letters.

There are plenty of computer games for those who enjoy spending three months building experience points for a computerized party of adventurers or reenacting the battle of Gettysburg by ordering around dozens of tiny on-screen soldiers. But for players who revel in the confounding conundrum, there has been no great puzzle game with a central plot and a sustained challenge.

Send up a Roman candle – *The Fool's Errand* is here.

The plot of this game from **Miles Computing** involves a fool searching for wisdom. For each puzzle he solves, he earns one piece of a map. But the map itself is a puzzle, and having all the pieces doesn't guarantee success. Each puzzle is introduced and named by a scroll. Put together, these scrolls outline the story. Once you've solved all the puzzles, go back and find the clues in the scrolls. Only then can you complete the map, find more than a dozen treasures, and gain wisdom.

You have to figure out the rules of this card game. Once you've determined into which category the different tarot cards fall, you should be on the road to victory.

Though there are several puzzles that appear only once, most fall into a few categories. For example, there are several word-search puzzles where, given a category such as birds or colors, you have to find more than 20 items that fit the category. You probably started solving these puzzles in grade school, and nothing about them has changed since then.

If you have trouble with the word searches, it's probably because you're trying to make things more difficult than they really are. All the items will read left to right for horizontal answers, and top to bottom for vertical ones. There are no backward answers, no diagonals. And the answers are at least vaguely familiar. If the category is countries, you're not going to have to find some obscure island country that was renamed just a few months ago.

Another common *Fool's Errand* category is the jigsaw puzzle. Again, these are very straightforward, the only challenge being that the pieces are uniformly square. But if you read the clues in the scrolls, you'll get an idea of what the finished pictures should look like. From there, you're on your own.

Another type of jigsaw cuts a rectangle into geometric pieces, most with letters on them. By replacing the pieces in the rectangle, a message is spelled out.

Simple anagrams are also common. Usually, the letters you rearrange fit into a category. For example, in an early puzzle, you must rearrange letters to form the traditional items given for anniversaries: fifth, wood; first, paper; and so on. Clues may also be given so the puzzles are solved like crossword puzzles.

It is very important when solving these anagrams to decide from the beginning if the letters you're given can be moved from one set of blocks to another. If you're given three words, the cursor will move from one to the other two. But if you mix up the letters, you're going to get stuck — and the letters won't go back into their original order if you exit and reenter the puzzle.

The hidden letter puzzles

The key to solving "The Couple" cryptogram can be found in what the fool is saying.

are a little more challenging. A phrase is written letter by letter at the bottom of a rectangle. By pressing on the different letter buttons, geometric shapes appear in the rectangle. By pressing the *correct* letters, you're left with a three-letter combination in the rectangle.

Here you should follow the words of an ancient sculptor — you carve away everything that doesn't look like a frog. In this case, you work your way slowly down the line of letters, pressing each one to see the result in the rectangle. It won't take long for distinct shapes to start appearing. Once you figure out even one of the letters, solving the rest becomes fairly simple.

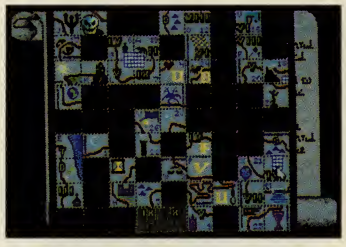
The most time-consuming puzzles are also button-pushers. Each numbered button (some puzzles have as many as eight) produces either a series of letters, or reverses the order of the letters already produced. You have to tap the buttons in the right order for a phrase to appear.

Start these puzzles by writing down what each button does. You'll get the answer faster if you push the buttons at random, but have some idea of cause and effect. Then use the process of elimination to work out the answer.

Codes can be solved with simple letter substitution. In most cases, you're given enough clues to solve the codes, but even without a starting point, you can begin with one-letter words or familiar letter patterns. A four-letter word that begins and ends with the same letter, for example, is probably "that," especially if there's a three-letter word that begins the same way ("the").

These puzzles are tricky. Each numbered button produces a letter combination or reverses the letters you already have. Pushing them in the right order reveals a phrase.

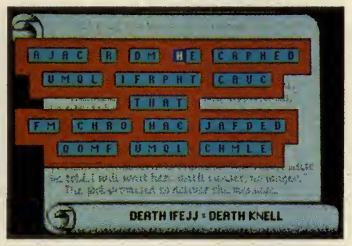
"The High Priestess" puzzle is the most time-consuming. Each time you think you've cracked it, it becomes a new problem. Two other puzzles, "The Hermit" and "Humbug," provide vital clues for solving early sections of "The High Priestess."



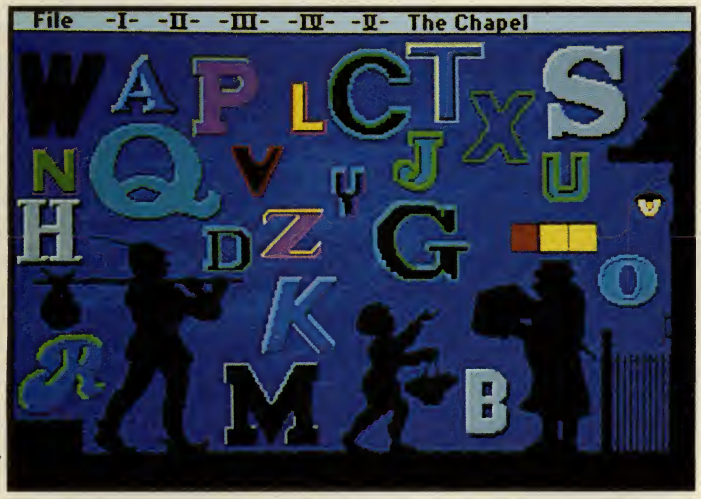
Work on the map periodically. Once you've completed all the puzzles, you'll have 81 pieces — far too many to start matching unless you've already joined some preliminary pieces.

The best thing about *The Fool's Errand* — more important than its great graphics or consistent level of challenge — is that it plays fair. There are some games that expect you to do the impossible: find a clue hidden in the instructions, know Act 1, Scene iii of *Julius Caesar*, or be able to give the scientific name for the wood-boring tick found only in Argentina. *There are no tricks here.* None. The answers are actually extremely straightforward. That doesn't mean you won't have trouble solving a few. It just means that when you finally do come upon the answer, you'll slap yourself on the forehead for your stupidity.

The jigsaw puzzles aren't difficult to solve, especially if you've read the scroll for a few hints about the final picture's appearance.



The codes require simple letter substitution. You shouldn't have much trouble solving them since eight letters are provided for you at the bottom.



"Find that which is not" is the object of "The Chapel." Arrange the letters not *shown into the answer of the puzzle.*

GP

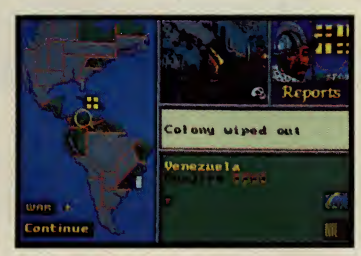
Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; EGA or Tandy 16-color graphics.

GOLD OF THE

MATTHEW A. FIRME

Did you think conquering the New World involves just getting out of your ship and planting your country's flag? Think again. There are colonists to feed, rival nations to fight — not to mention hostile natives.

And if those weren't enough to fill your time, your king is always demanding more taxes, yet he won't give you a large enough army to protect the assets you've managed to collect. And who knows when your territories will be raided, cutting your profits in half. No, it's not easy to be a conqueror.



A colony can fall prey to a number of ills, from an attack by a rival nation to slave uprisings. This one was wiped out by plague.

It is easy, though, to become familiar with the Age of Discovery with *Gold of the Americas* from **SSG**. As the name suggests, this strategy game deals with the European conquest of North, South, and Central America between the years 1500-1800.

You choose any one of four European countries, England, France, Portugal, or Spain, to play, then set the experience level of your three computer-controlled opponents. Another option allows you to play with historic or random settings for both the New World and Europe.

On the historic setting, foreign interest in certain regions of the New World, the distribution of funding, and the expertise of explorers are all factual. The random setting imposes no such background, allocating resources by chance. So, whereas in the historic mode Spain's success comes mainly in the 16th and 17th centuries in Central and South America, the results of a random game could be a vast Portuguese North American empire with scattered English colonies throughout South America.

Once you've chosen your options and country, game play begins with a map of the Americas, blank except for one or two areas that have already been explored. As the blanks are surveyed, they are filled in. To the right of the map is the main menu section. Each of the four countries takes turns, each turn covering a span of ten years. After 30 turns, the country with the most colonies in the New World wins the game.

The first part of each turn is the acquisition stage. Icons represent armies, colonists, trading ships, warships, privateers, slaves, and explorers — the raw materials of conquest. Above each icon (except for the explorer icon) is a bar graph indicating the items that have been granted to you for that turn by your king, as well as the items you can purchase. The money for purchases comes from the treasury you build through colonization, and from a secret fund of personal wealth gained by forcing natives, slaves, and colonists to overproduce.

As the blank areas on the map are explored, they are filled in. Flags identify the colonies of the four European powers.

Next, you place your items on the map. Colonists can only be placed in explored, but unclaimed, areas on the map. Native societies always inhabit an uncolonized region, and the natives often attack your colonists, resenting the unwanted intrusion of foreigners. Placing

His Majesty's tax collector is in many ways your greatest obstacle. You quickly need to learn how to pad your non-taxable secret fund.

Raiding the neighboring colonies is a good way to earn extra money. Once most of the map has been explored, leading raids becomes the best use of an explorer's time.

The point totals seen below each nation's flag represent not only the number of colonies each has, but also the productivity of each colony.

an army or two with a new colony is a good idea, although within a few turns the diseases your colonists carry wipe out all the natives anyway.

Once you've placed your items, your three computer opponents place theirs. The results of each turn are reported as news from the colonies: a trading ship lost at sea, your colony in the Yucatan prospering, slave uprising in the West Indies. Then the income from your colonies and expeditions is totaled and taxed (quite heavily) by your king. With what money remains you can outfit additional expeditions, recruit colonists, and so on. The process is repeated until all 30 turns have been taken.

Gold of the Americas is not the most sophisticated strategy game around, nor is it the most challenging. The options available during each turn are rather limited, although it does take some practice to get a feel for the effects each option has on the outcome of the game. The program provides a sufficient number of random events during each turn to keep things interesting, but the repetition of turn after turn can become tedious.

Yet, despite these limitations, *Gold of the Americas* is an enjoyable game. There is plenty of historic content, and the familiarity of the characters, countries, and premise helps to hold your interest. After all, the game allows you the opportunity to rewrite history, and there's something thrilling about competing against ruthless explorers such as Cortez or Balboa. And if the importation of slaves and the genocide of nations of Native Americans aren't admirable accomplishments, at least they're familiar trademarks of European influence throughout history.

Although players experienced in strategic simulations may well find this game limited, *Gold of the Americas* is an excellent introduction for those not familiar with the genre.

GP

Allegiances change often during the 300 years covered in a game. If you're at war with a country, it's more likely to attack your colonies and trading vessels than during peacetime.

You can try to invade and overtake the colonies of a country with whom you're at war.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, MCGA, CGA, or Hercules graphics.

HARD BALL II

BRIAN CARROLL

San Francisco's Candlestick Park adds weather's unpredictability to the drama of the game. There are seven stadiums to choose from.

Last year's World Series is a fast-fading memory, and this baseball season is scarcely underway. This spells trouble for hard-core baseball fans. Maybe the best cure for those between-season withdrawal pains is a few hours spent playing *Hardball II*.

The catcher's view is clearly the best view when you're standing in the batter's box. You'll get the best possible look at the ball.

This **Accolade** release is, of course, the follow-up to the 1985 hit, *Hardball*, which sold more than 500,000 copies. The newer edition has all the elements that made its predecessor a bestseller, as well as a few surprises.

Probably the most welcome addition is *Hardball II*'s team editor feature. With it you can create any team conceivable. Translate your best baseball cards into the dream team for all ages. How about the Babe in right, Mattingly at first, and Sandy on the mound? It's a baseball fan's dream come true.

Equally pleasing are improvements made in playability. Throws from the outfield now take much less time. The infielders — previously a collection of statues — now actually play defense for you. In fact, you better have them reacting as soon as the ball is hit, or you're in for a long afternoon.

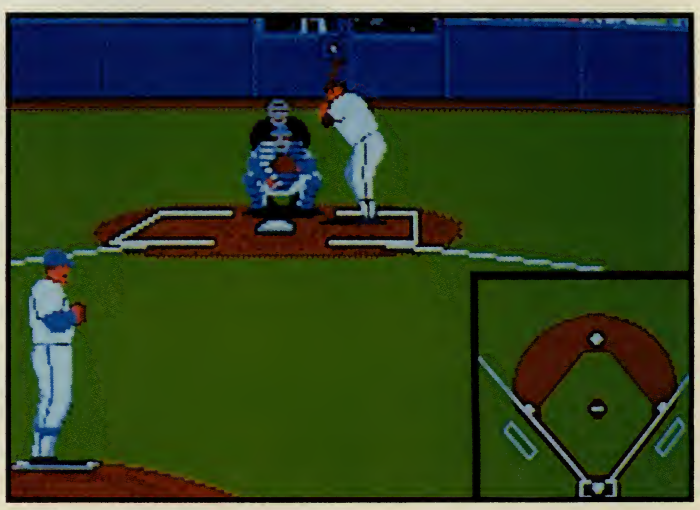
Number crunchers will appreciate the game's ability to compile and display statistics in virtually every category. The stats are revised after each at-bat and from game to game as well.

There are a few rough edges in *Hardball II*. Loading the game for the first time can be frustrating, for example. Even if you're anxious to dive right into the action, you first have to wade through various puddles of options. But don't get discouraged — the game action is well worth the wait.

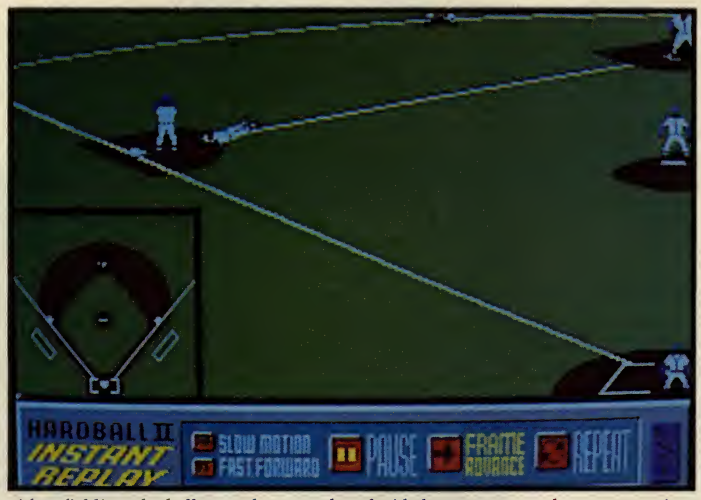
And give Accolade credit for breaking down the pitcher-batter match-up into such detail. The player's control over pitches and swings has never been better. *Hardball II* is the first PC baseball package that allows players to employ complex pitching strategies. That's bad news for hitters.

To do well in *Hardball II*, you have to hit well. To hit well, you have to practice, practice, practice. Work on timing and waiting. Don't try to guess every pitch. And since you can't read the pitcher's mind, wait for the pitch you want. This will force the pitcher to throw more strikes. He's going to have to throw it over the plate sooner or later, so try sitting on the ball. Patience is a virtue all great hitters have in common.

Like the pitchers, the hitters are controlled pitch by



The centerfield view is the one you always see on television. It can help you most when pitching.



After fielding the ball, our shortstop has decided to try to peg the runner going home.

pitch. From the batting menu you can steal bases, bunt, try for a ground ball, or go for the fences. You can also elect to swing high, low, inside, or outside. By setting the game so that you can't see the pitcher's location selection, you can be as much in the dark as major league hitters are.

A common mistake when playing defense in *Hardball II* is to overreact once the ball is hit. Remember, the computer automatically selects the fielder you control. The key is not to use your controls too soon. Do so, and you might have your pitcher shagging fly balls in centerfield — which won't win too many ball games.

As player/manager, there are a myriad of details to attend to, not the least of which is pitching. *Hardball II* pitchers tire out after a given number of innings, so you need to get some action going in the bull pen at the appropriate time. Relief pitchers need at least one inning to loosen up, so plan ahead. It won't help your plans for the pennant to have that first inning the reliever's first in the game. However, you also want to avoid tiring him out in warmups, so exercise good judgment.

Managers must also decide their infield strategy. Using the menus, you can have your infielders set up for the double play, guard the first- and third-base lines, or close in at the corners. *Hardball II* even lets you design your own defense. Use the custom option to align your players where you want them on the field.

It's impossible to write about *Hardball II* without mentioning the available parks. Although no official teams are available, official ballparks are yours for the asking. San Francisco's Candlestick Park won't give you an earthquake, but it does offer those enormous foul areas. Toronto's SkyDome looks just like the real thing, and home runs are just as difficult to hit. Then there's Yankee Stadium with its short right field deck and, of course, Boston's Fenway Park with the Green Monster in all its glory. Each park forces a different strategy, and each park thwarts you in its own way.

The pull-down menus will take a little getting used to.

This sparkling game obviously has enough options to keep the game interesting, regardless of your level of play or how long you stay at it. So please rise for the singing of our national anthem — and let's play ball!

GP

Once the ball is hit, the computer will give you control over that player closest to the ball.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory (640K for Tandy); EGA, MCGA, CGA, Tandy 16-color, or Hercules graphics; joystick optional; supports sound boards.

LEISURE SUIT

GARY MEREDITH

It was a shock to find Kalalau loved another, but finding out with whom she's now sharing her hot tub is worse. Anyway, come back a bit later, even if it's just to check the mail.

You have to give a guy like Larry Laffer credit. Most people would have given up after losing a true love, as Larry lost Eve in the beginning of *Leisure Suit Larry II: Looking for Love in Several Wrong Places*. But good ol' Larry doesn't know the meaning of the word "quit." (Actually, Larry missed school that day and doesn't know the meaning of "quince," "quisling," or "quixotic," either.) He defeated the foul Dr. Nonookee and married his *real* true love, Kalalau, daughter of the chief of exotic Nontoonyt Island.

Master of all he surveys — or so Larry thinks. As long as you're here, take a peek through the binoculars on the left. There's nothing like getting things started right.

All seemed sunlight and orange blossoms until Larry came home one day to find his beloved Kalalau in the arms of another. In one fell swoop, Larry lost his wife, his job, and his security. The only thing he had left was — you guessed it — his trusty leisure suit.

In Sierra's *Leisure Suit Larry III: Passionate Patti in Pursuit of Pulsating Pectorals*, Larry is on the prowl once again, looking for that one perfect woman. On Nontoonyt Island, he's got a lot of women from which to choose, but will they choose him? The years have not been kind to Larry, but with a little effort, he just might work himself into the winner's circle one more time.

You must help him find his way through a maze of women with names such as Tawni, Bambi, and Cherri. To secure his divorce from Kalalau, Larry must deal with a kinky, cross-dressing lawyer. To get his money back from a beach blanket bimbette, he develops his hidden talents as a woodcarver and dressmaker. To break into videos with an amorous aerobics instructor, he experiences pain and gain in a raunchy spa.

But just when Larry seems doomed to a life of meaningless relationships, he happens upon a bar pianist named Passionate Patti, who changes his life. And your life, too, for when Larry wanders off into the jungle, you become Patti, and spend the rest of the game searching for — no surprises here — your own true love.

Be forewarned, however, that this is a game for mature audiences. There's lots of raunchiness, and even though it's good-natured sleaze, it may offend some people.

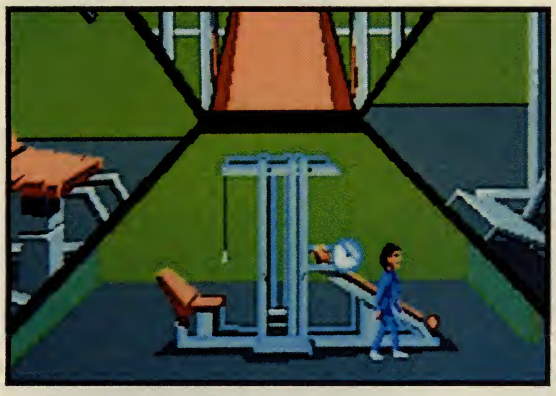
If you've played either of the previous *Leisure Suit Larry* games — or any other Sierra adventures for that matter — you already know that the bywords for playing are "observe," "improvise," and "save." Whenever you come to a new scene, you must look at everything. In turn, you must often contrive not-so-obvious ways for using whatever objects you find. That interestingly shaped piece of wood you find in the forest is a good example of this.

And it's so easy to find

Tawni has your credit card and your self-respect. If you want to get anything out of this relationship (like money), you'll have to go native in a big way, and work on your weaving and whittling.

You'll find Suzi Howe — of Dewey, Cheatem, and Howe — most helpful with the legal tangles of your divorce. Just remember to wear something frilly if you want her full cooperation.

LARRY III: PASSIONATE PATTI IN PURSUIT OF PULSATING PECTORALS



Bambi's video could be bigger than Jane Fonda's, but you won't co-star with her unless you make use of these modern instruments of torture. By the way, don't forget personal hygiene.

At last, the woman of your dreams. Too bad that her *dreams seem to include a jerk named Arnold. Her slumbering whispers are enough to push Larry over the edge and into a dense and dangerous jungle.*

Now that you've acquired a woman's point of view, don't forget to accessorize properly. You'll definitely need the bra, panties, and pantyhose where you're going, as well as that empty champagne bottle.

yourself falling off a cliff or being attacked by a vicious feral pig that saving becomes a natural part of game play. Sierra's save feature is the ultimate in simplicity, but if you need even more help, now there's a feature that reminds you to save. You set the interval, and the game will ask you automatically if you want to save your progress.

Your single most important tool in *Leisure Suit Larry III* is your copy of *Nontoonyt Tonight*, the island's magazine of useful facts. If you've taken even a cursory notice of recent events, you'll have no trouble answering the game entrance questions at the beginning of play. But you won't get very far at all without *Nontoonyt Tonight* because buried in the articles and ads are all the clues you'll need to bring Patti and Larry together for a final sequence worthy of Mel Brooks.

So grab your leisure suit (you still have one, don't you?) and let's go find Patti a man and Larry a woman.

After a tortuous trek through the bamboo as Patti, you are finally reunited with your Larry. Unfortunately, you're now both ingredients in the natives' soup du jour. Let's hope you didn't forget anything back at the bar.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, MCGA, CGA, Tandy 16-color, or Hercules graphics; hard disk recommended; mouse or joystick optional; supports sound cards.

THE MANHOLE

GARY MEREDITH

Imagine walking along a road and happening upon a huge beanstalk growing out of a manhole. For the sake of argument, we'll assume that your name's not Jack, so prior beanstalk experience is not an issue. What do you do?

Well, until such time as a real stalk blocks your path, you can still try your luck with *the Manhole* by **Activision**. You won't get that pesky beanstalk sap on your clothes, and there won't be a giant fe-fi-foing and wanting you for haute cuisine.

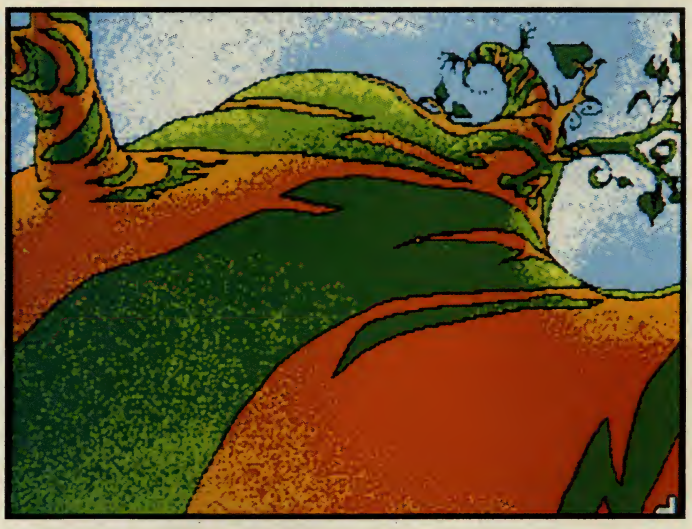
Well, this certainly isn't something you see every day. The question is, have you fallen into some sort of fairy tale, or has kudzu finally taken over the entire planet?

The Manhole was originally introduced for the Macintosh, first as a HyperCard-based game, and later, on CD-ROM. In this form, it won the 1988 SPA Excellence in Software Award for Best New Use of a Computer. With the transition to MS-DOS, the game has actually been enhanced. The most obvious improvement is in the graphics, especially when viewed in VGA or MCGA. Anyone who has seen the Mac version will attest to the difference color makes.

Although it was primarily designed for children, *the Manhole*, with its charming sense of humor and amazing graphics, manages to capture the imagination of players of all ages. In a sense, it's not really a game. There's nothing to win or lose, you can't make a wrong move, and there are a variety of ways to proceed. Because a mouse is recommended, game play is of the point-and-click school, so a player doesn't have to know how to read in order to play. You can use the keyboard or a joystick as well as a mouse, but those options make the game a bit less enjoyable to play.

Whenever there is text on the screen, the lines are always repeated by the characters in digitized voices. This works to varying degrees, depending upon how good your PC's speaker is, but usually the words are at least recognizable.

The top of the beanstalk brings you to a dark land where mysterious structures loom in the distance. From here, you can't see exactly what's what, so perhaps you should try that nearby castle for a better point of view.



While you have the option of going up or down, it really doesn't matter, so let's go up. Everything is so interconnected that you'll eventually see it all, no matter which direction you take when first starting out.

You always promised yourself that one day you were going to get into chess. This is a bit more literal than you originally intended, however. The bird will talk to you, but only about its own personal hobby.

If you have a supported sound board, the audio is stunning, ported directly from the CD-ROM version.

A warning — and a serious one — for those who do not own at least a 10 Mhz 286 computer. You may find *the Manhole* extremely frustrating to play. Because of the elaborate graphics, a reasonably fast machine is necessary for smooth playing, and while it *will* play, though not very enjoyably, on a 10 Mhz XT, anything slower should not be considered.

Since there are no wrong moves, you can go wherever you want. The exploring always begins at the manhole, but from there, you may go up the stalk or down. As you progress, your options multiply. If, perhaps, you find yourself in a room with paintings on the wall, you might choose to go into one of the paintings and you may come out in a totally different location. A short jaunt up the stairs of a castle tower ends with a view over the castle battlements to a gigantic chess game, of which your castle is one member. Articles that you find may produce a new game to play, or a lesson in French, or just something pretty to admire.

If it does nothing else, *the Manhole* at least fosters a sense of tangential thinking in children. To approach a situation from directions alien to everyday life should certainly enhance the abilities of children (and some adults) to see beyond their own particular corner of the world. And besides, it's just so much *fun* to journey around the worlds that Activision has created in *the Manhole*.

Most people wouldn't be nearly so hospitable if a stranger just happened to drop in during TV time. The bunny is a gracious host, although once you're provided with tea, it's back to the boob tube for him.

GP

The dragon seems a nice enough fellow, but if he offers to warm up your biscuit for you, politely refuse. That is, of course, unless you prefer your biscuits black and crispy.. Maybe he'll get a microwave for Christmas.

Although the walrus seems a little grumpy, almost everyone else is quite friendly. If you can't parlez to the turtle, don't worry. A fish will show up with the translation — written and spoken.

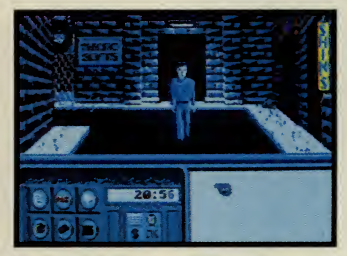
Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, MCGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick optional; mouse recommended; supports sound cards.

NEUROMANCER

NEIL RANDALL

The book *Neuromancer* was the brainchild of Vancouver science fiction author William Gibson. In it, he described a high-speed, high-junk, near-future version of Earth in which drugs, computers, sociological and biological nightmares, and ecological decay combined to create a new breed of "cowboy." This cowboy rode not into the west, but rather into "cyberspace," where he fought, quite literally, for the rewards of digital information.

Quickly termed "cyberpunk," this new breed of science fiction produced the inevitable pack of clones. No cyberpunk novel, however, has been as slick or successful as *Neuromancer*, with the possible exception of Gibson's own *Mona Lisa Overdrive*. What *Neuromancer* was able to do was both exciting and artistically fascinating: It demonstrated in no uncertain terms what life inside a vast telecommunications network would be like. And believe me, it's frightening.



Paralan, our hero, strolls the streets of Chiba City. Behind him is Micro Softs, while to his left is Shin's Pawn Shop.

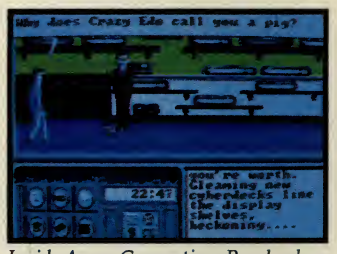
The game *Neuromancer* is **Interplay Productions'** attempt to simulate Gibson's computercentric world. It is a role-playing game in which you explore the dregs of Chiba City. Most of your fellow cyberspace cowboys have disappeared, and you're determined to find out why. But Chiba City is a tough nut to crack, and you need all the resources you can muster.

You have several sources of information. You can talk to people; operate the PAX (public access) system; use your cyberdeck and comlink software to hook up to a wealth of databases; and, once you have an appropriate deck and the most advanced software, enter cyberspace itself.

But before you can go anywhere, you'll have to learn how to best use the first two methods for obtaining information. The game begins as you wake up in a repulsive greasy spoon, and you're immediately confronted by the owner (appropriately named Ratz). He wants 46 credits to settle your bill. Pressing "I" (or clicking on the appropriate icon) reveals that you have only six credits to your name. Pressing "T" (talk) lets you reply to Ratz's demand in one of several ways. If you tell him you don't have the money, he'll tell you to use the PAX. Press "P," answer the copy-protection query, and you're on the PAX.

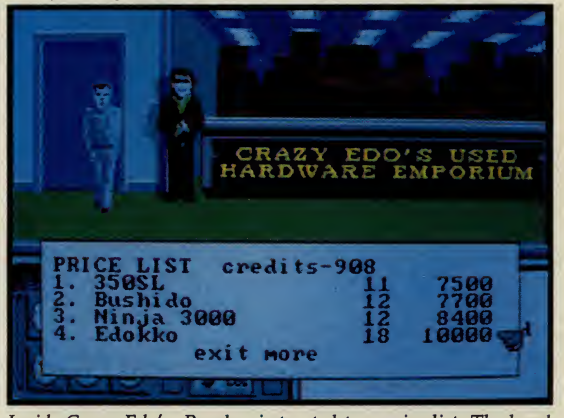
Several options are available here. Go ahead and read the First-time PAX User Information—it's very funny. Then catch up on the news. Access the banking option and withdraw a couple hundred credits to carry with you. Then carefully read through all your messages, marking down whatever information you think you'll need. Finally, exit the system, press the Inventory key, and give Ratz his 46 credits.

That done, you're free to roam the streets of Chiba City. Visit the Body Shop, but don't sell any body parts just yet (you'll have to later on). Don't go into the Massage Parlor, either, unless you're willing to get arrested — and you can't afford that. Instead, head for the Pawn Shop to answer the message you were sent. Then it's off to the Gentleman Loser, where Shiva has something else you need. If you try to enter the Cheap Hotel, incidentally, you'll be thrown out for not paying your bill. Don't worry about it; you can look after it soon.



Inside Asano Computing, Paralan has several conversational possibilities. Asking this question about Crazy Edo is just one of them. As it turns out, it's a good one to ask.

The Gentleman Loser has a PAX terminal and a cyberjack. And here's where the fun begins. Using your UXB cyberdeck and the Comlink 1.0 software, and keeping beside you your notes from Matt Shaw's message about available databases, access the Regular Fellows database to learn a couple stolen passwords, one of which

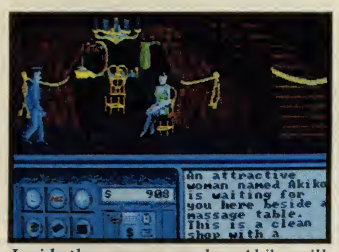


Inside Crazy Edo's, Paralan is treated to a price list. The hand points to Edo's most expensive cyberdeck—expensive, but barely enough to get by on.

is to the second level of the Cheap Hotel's database. Access it, and you'll discover some very interesting possibilities. Money is scarce — why spend it needlessly?

Your survival depends to a significant degree on how well you use your skills. Using your cryptology skill, for instance, is essential to gaining access to the second level of the Asano Computer database, which in turn gives you new information.

In the streetlights outside Shin's Pawn Shop, one of Zone's "working girls" poses an inventive question. She's important — don't just insult her.



Inside the massage parlor, Akiko will ask you several questions. Believe it or not, she's of most value if you ask her for information. Of course, you'll also get arrested.

These suggestions will get you started in *Neuromancer*. But you have much more to do before you can really begin to crack this game. For one thing, you'll need money. Then, you'll also need skill chips. You can get money by entering into contracts, or by selling your body parts. You can get skill chips in a variety of places, including unlikely spots such as the sleazy Micro Softs. With these skill chips you will be able to speak like a cop (and remember where cops hang out), repair hardware, debug software, psychoanalyze, and so on.

So how well does *Neuromancer*, the game, reflect the world introduced in *Neuromancer*, the novel? All in all, fairly well. The game's Chiba City certainly draws on the gritty, plastic, dark, disturbing world of Gibson's imagination, even though more locations would have been nice. Like the novel, the game focuses on the activities leading up to your entry into cyberspace, and like the novel, you quite literally have to give your arm and your leg to get there. Finally, the game, like the book, is centered on interaction with characters and with computers. You gain information from both sources, and you can do without neither.

What *Neuromancer*, the game, lacks, however, is the frantic speed of the novel. Once you finally reach cyberspace, the speed increases, but you'll spend a considerable amount of time simply wandering the streets of Chiba City, wondering what it is you're supposed to be doing. To be sure, this is the problem with many role-playing games, but you'll find yourself stumped quite frequently here. So you must visit and revisit location after location, and you must access and reaccess database after database in case there's something you might have missed. When this happens, the game isn't as enjoyable as it could be.

Once arrested, Paralan is treated to Chiba's criminal law system. Come here often enough, and you'll be sentenced to death. But death is not final—you can be resurrected with plastic body parts.

But when there's action and things are falling into place, *Neuromancer* is exciting. Crack another database, and new worlds open. Find another skill chip and situations in which to use it, and more information opens up to you. And when, finally, you get a chance to enter cyberspace, you'll find yourself with a serious addiction. In these ways, the game really is like the book.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA or EGA graphics; one or two joysticks optional. Will not work on IBM PS/2's.

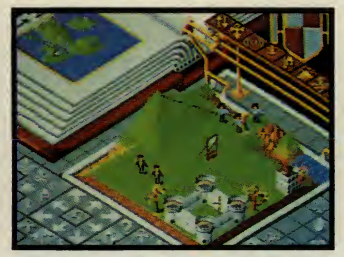
POPULOUS

MATTHEW A. FIRME

The open book at the top of the screen gives an overview of the entire world you seek to conquer while the closeup area shows the walkers getting your immediate attention.

Imagine getting up from your desk, leaving your computer, and going out into the world possessing all the powers you have while playing *Populous*. You could flatten that shopping center down the block, the one that made your property value plummet, and cover the land with forest.

Or you could move your house to the top of a mountain overlooking a vast inland sea where Indiana once was. The people below would look up, dimly remembering a time when your mountain was just another neighborhood, and they would marvel at your omnipotence. They would plant crops in the rich, flat ground you gave them, and they would praise your name at harvest time — "Oh thank you, our lord and protector, oh mighty Marvin!"



With the Promised Lands accessory disk, you can play a major role in the French Revolution. The evil people are the ones in red coats.

Or Wanda, or Mr. Big, or whatever you want them to call you.

It's amazingly easy to develop delusions of grandeur while playing *Populous*, a new game from **Electronic Arts**. You play one of two gods who share dominion over the world and its people. Each of you has a group of followers, yours "good" and his "evil." (You can play the evil god, but only for one round unless you're playing with a friend via a modem. As the good god, you can play round after round as long as you keep wiping out the evil people.) Your task is to make the lives of your people as prosperous as possible, fostering their growth by divinely manipulating their environment and behavior.

The majority of these manipulations take the form of flattening land on which they can settle. You can raise or lower the varying terrains around your initial population one square at a time, trying to create as large a plot of arable land as possible. Your people, known in the game's terminology as *walkers*, will erect shelters and plant crops as you provide land for them.

The sophistication of the walkers' shelters depends on how much food they can raise. On a small patch of usable land, a walker might be able to build a wigwam of skins and grow enough crops to sustain only himself. But on a large clearing, your walkers can build a castle and raise enough food to increase their population rapidly.

While you're working with your good walkers, the evil god is doing the same with his followers. So in their area of the world, the evil people are also building, planting crops, and expanding their population. Eventually the two peoples will cover all the available land on the map, and fighting will begin wherever their territories overlap.

In harsher climates such as this ice world, walkers have a shorter life span so they cover less ground than in more hospitable areas.

Inevitably, as tensions mount and land becomes scarce, global warfare erupts. Now the true object of *Populous* becomes clear: You must do whatever you can to guarantee that your walkers win the war.

There are a number of variables in *Populous*, insuring that each new game offers a novel challenge. In some rounds, for example, your powers are limited. You might be unable to summon an earthquake, or you might be unable to alter land. Even the climates of your sections of the world will change, from icy tundra to arid desert — each calling for different strategies.

Using the "Promised Lands" accessory disk included with the game, your walkers can become soldiers of the French Revolution, cowboys and Indians in the Old West, or people made from what appear to be Lego blocks, living in Lego land.

Things take on new shapes in Silly Land, another of the worlds on the Promised Lands accessory disk. Those green creatures are your people.

Creating a knight is one of your most potent weapons against the enemy. Here your knight is looting and pillaging, two valuable attributes. A strong knight can destroy vast areas of enemy territory, leaving behind only a wake of smoking ruins.

After each game a scoring screen appears. The game ends when one side or the other has been wiped out.

Skeptics will be surprised at how very enjoyable playing a god turns out to be. The walkers, both good and bad, are fascinating to watch as they move about. They really seem to have lives of their own, and your control over their lives gives you an undeniable sense of power—especially once you start exercising your ability to heap suffering on the evil walkers.

Soon you'll find yourself feeling parental about your followers, nurturing them and watching them grow. You'll be happy to wipe out the evil walkers with volcanoes, swamps, and earthquakes should they stand in the way of your chosen people.

That feeling of power hooks you from the start. But the *real* success of *Populous* lies in the game's nearly perfect balance between action and strategy. The screen is always active — your closeup view reveals walkers moving busily about, while the world view shows the blinking colors of the two factions, migrating and expanding across the land. This constant activity underscores the feeling that you are watching real, motivated people, and creates a very urgent and living backdrop for your divine intervention.

Another of the game's strong points is its beautifully designed interface, an icon-based system of options and commands. By moving your pointer to the appropriate icon, you can quickly and easily perform almost any task. Although the game can be played using keyboard commands, it was obviously designed to be played with a mouse and is more difficult and sluggish using the keyboard.

Populous' only real flaw is its documentation, which isn't as helpful as it could be for the beginning player. Many elements of this complex game are barely addressed, and what *is* said is sometimes confusing. The hint booklet from the game's publisher, for instance, seems to contain better instructions, in some respects, than those included with the software. But despite the documentation, the game's strong design, complex strategy, and engaging premise encourage hours of hands-on training.

GP

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick or mouse recommended; two-player game via a modem.

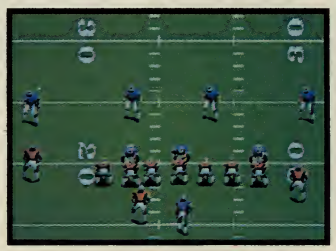
TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL

GARY MEREDITH

Does a feeling of uneasiness come over you around the end of every year, when the bowl games and pro football playoffs appear? And does that uneasiness turn to sheer panic by mid-January when you realize that you're only a Super Bowl away from no more football for months? Do you find yourself savoring the beer commercials that feature football has-beens? If any of these statements apply to you, there may be a way to ease the withdrawal you suffer every year. It's *TV Sports: Football* by Cinemaware.

In this gridiron game, you have the option of playing (or just watching) a single game or a whole season of pro football. You can modify your team to suit your own philosophy of football, and then enter a league against 27 other teams either controlled by the computer or up to 27 fanatic friends. All the teams of the NFL are represented, even though actual players are not. It doesn't, however, take much imagination to catch the allusion the designers were trying for when they named the San Francisco quarterback Steve Dakota.

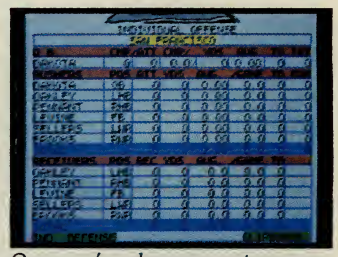
The clipboard option lets you pick your favorite team and, for the exhibition season, any opponent. Maybe for once the Falcons could actually beat the 49ers. Then again....



The shotgun, or spread formation, is always a good passing formation. The problem is that the defense knows it's good, so a reverse, or fake reverse, may catch them napping.

So Turk McGill is gainfully employed these days. You figured all those head butts would have left ol' Turk less than eloquent.

Here we have the requisite crowd shot. Some of these folks look awfully familiar. Looks like it might be a bit chilly, so where are the bozos with no shirts?



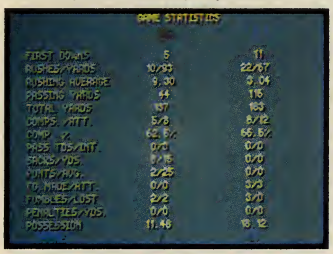
Once you've chosen your team, you can customize it to your favorite style of play. Right now, this team is built for speed and finesse. But a few trades could make it a grind-it-out power team.

You have the option of practicing particular plays, going through an exhibition season, or tackling the regular season and playoffs. The computer keeps track of virtually every statistic in which a football fiend might revel. Use the stats to spot your team's weak points. Then take the proper steps to alleviate them.

Once a game starts, you can either control all the play-calling or let the computer do it. If you don't initiate a call after eight seconds, the computer will take over. On successive huddles, the computer will call a play after five seconds until you start calling plays again. So if you want complete control of your game plan, you'd better be quick with the joystick.

At first, this tendency for the computer to take over is disconcerting, and you may feel

Offensive or defensive calls are made from this screen, which breaks your primary call into four sub-plays. If you don't make a choice in eight seconds, the computer does it for you.



Turnovers tell the tale in the first half. Indianapolis is losing primarily because it employs a high-risk offense. Unless you're really confident of your control, stick with a conservative game plan and grind out the yards on the ground.

that you aren't being given enough time. But remember that you don't actually have to *call* a play, but just *begin* the call by moving the joystick. You'll see that the pace of the game isn't quite as frantic as you might imagine.

The computer also learns your tendencies after awhile, and begins making similar calls if you decide to leave it alone. And you can always call a time-out if you can't think of anything else.

After playing a few games, you'll discover that different teams do indeed play the game differently. There are some teams that pass on almost every down, while others only put the ball in the air once or twice during the half. Most teams are fairly conservative in terms of strategy, but there are a few that succeed by doing the unpredictable. Because there is such widespread conservatism, you may be able to take advantage of the teams that play it safe by doing the unexpected. Again, the team with which you're playing dictates how effective this strategy will be.

While calling plays is important, if you want to get the most out of playing *TV Sports: Football*, you must still master the arcade aspects of the game. Kicking is fairly simple, being a matter of simply lining up crosshairs either dead center or to either side, depending on where the ball is spotted. Rushing, too, is a simple exercise. The ability to time a move just prior to a tackle is the key to success.

Bet you can't guess what this guy's saying to the folks back home. One can only wonder whether the pro football teams have included in their television contracts at least one "Hi, Mom!" per game.

The really tricky part comes during the passing game. To pass effectively involves a number of coordinated actions that include both the pass *and* the catch. If you don't cover anything else in the practice mode, work on your passing. The most critical phase is after the ball has left the quarterback's hand. You must fight the tendency to lift your finger from the fire button until you are *well* within a receiver's "catchable" area. Basic "down and out" pass patterns are best to practice on until you get the knack.

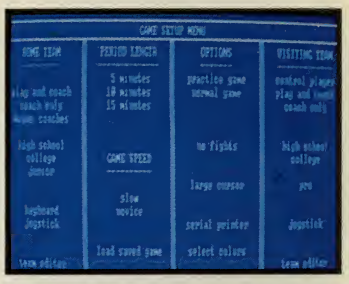
The end zone touchdown victory dance — a tradition in pro football that ranks right up there with the "wave" and lite beer commercials.

Hardware requirements: 512K minimum memory; VGA or EGA graphics; one or two joysticks optional. Will not work on IBM PS/2's.

GP

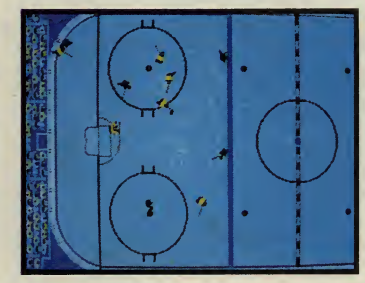
WAYNE GRETZKY

NEIL RANDALL



On the Game Setup Menu, you can select control, difficulty, team colors, and speed. Here, the home team (on pro level) takes on the computer (on junior level).

Sure Joe Montana and Magic Johnson have performed near miracles. But when sports magazines list the best professional team player of the 80s, any number of them choose Wayne Gretzky. No other athlete has matched Gretzky's complete dominance of a given sport. Gretzky meant more to hockey in the 80s than Babe Ruth meant to baseball during the 20s. After all, without Gretzky the National Hockey League would have floundered. Instead, it has prospered.



As the Boston centerman carries the puck toward his own blue line, a Montreal and a Boston player jostle in the corner. This will lead to penalties for fighting.

So what makes Gretzky so great? He's not the sport's best skater — not by a long shot. Nor does he have the hardest shot. But what Gretzky has that no other player in NHL history has had in such abundance is an uncanny degree of puck sense. His passes are not only always accurate, but they are also as soft as possible to allow the recipient the greatest chance at control. His stick-handling makes even the best defensemen look like rookies, and his shot — when he chooses to take it — seems to home on, rather than blast towards, the corners of the net.

The question, of course, is whether or not **Bethesda Softworks** could manage, in a computer game, to capture Gretzky's genius. The answer, quite simply, is no.

But they've done something better. Gretzky is *not* the focal point of this game. Hockey is. Real hockey. True hockey. *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* is to fans of the NHL what *Earl Weaver Baseball* is to fans of Major League Baseball.

In *Weaver*, Electronic Arts' famous PC baseball simulation, you can manage a team, control the players on the field, or have both or neither of these tasks performed by the computer. You can edit the statistics of any given player, and these stats are voluminous. You can build your own ballparks, start your own leagues, and so on. In other words, it's baseball at its most complete.

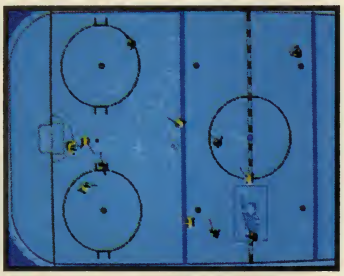
Gretzky lacks a few of *Weaver*'s features, but nothing that really counts. You can't fashion your own rink in *Gretzky* (as you can fashion parks in *Weaver*), but NHL ice surfaces are almost all of standard dimensions anyway. League play isn't possible on the *Gretzky* disk, but Bethesda offers a *Hockey League Simulator* that you can use with *Gretzky* or by itself.

The Timeout Menu appears after each whistle. You can see scoring stats, penalty stats, even an instant replay. Or you can go back to the setup menu and change the game's options.

But *Gretzky* approaches *Weaver* in a few crucial respects. First, you can edit players' statistics, and you can input stats for your favorite team (you can also order team disks from Bethesda for under $40). Furthermore, players are rated in no fewer than 12 characteristics, including skills such as puck control, skating, shooting, passing, and checking; and personal traits such as aggressiveness, quickness, and susceptibility to injury and fatigue.

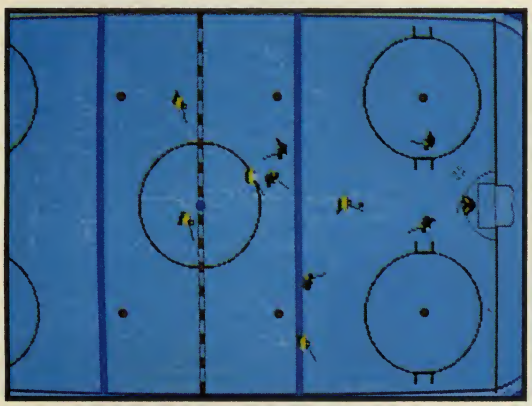
Like *Weaver*, *Gretzky* lets you coach the team, control the players, both, or neither. Coaching the team means going to the trouble of setting up three different lines for even-strength play (i.e., when neither team has a penalty), in 5-on-5, 4-on-4, and 3-on-3 situations. Here you also set up lines for three types of power play (5-on-4, 5-on-3, and 4-on-3), and three types of short-handed situations (4-on-5, 3-on-5, and 3-on-4). In other words, as coach you are allowed to plan for all possible offensive and defensive situations. Then, during the game, pressing the appropriate function key lets you send your selected line onto the ice. As in real hockey, the significant coaching happens before the game starts, not during play.

With the setup menu, you



As in real hockey, penalties aren't called until the penalized team touches the puck. Here, the referee signals a penalty, and as soon as the Boston defenseman touches the puck, the play will stop.

tailor the game the way you want. Here you choose the opposing teams and decide whether you will coach your team or control your players (or both). You also decide your team's and your opponent's skill levels, ranging from high school to pro. You can set the period length at 5, 10, 15, or 20 minutes (20 is regulation, but an hour-long game is very long indeed), and you set the game speed to normal, slow, or novice. Start with novice, but go to normal as soon as possible — after all, the whole point of hockey is its speed. Finally, you select whether you want a regulation game or a playoff game, and whether or not you'll allow fights (international hockey doesn't).



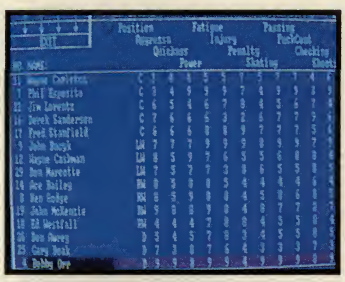
The Boston centerman crosses the Montreal blue line and winds up for a shot at the Montreal net. At high levels of difficulty, the goalies are very tough to beat.

Controlling one player at a time, you pass using the keyboard, mouse, or joystick to place the cursor at one location on the ice and clicking the button. To shoot the puck at the net, place the cursor on the net and press. You can control the speed of the pass or the shot, but not its precise location. The game takes into account the rules for icing, offside (both blueline and redline offsides), and penalties of all kinds. You can body check, hook, and even hold a player, always with the possibility of getting a penalty.

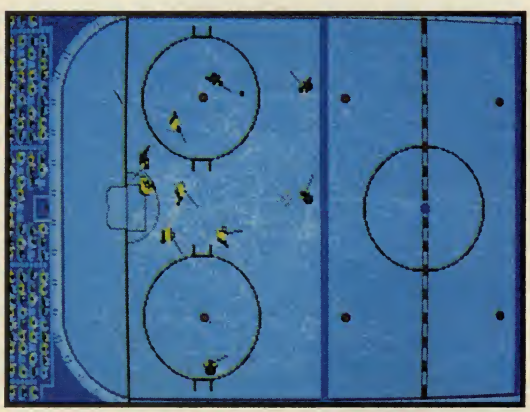
Gretzky isn't quite perfect, at least not in this first version. The computer player passes the puck too often, especially on the power-play. The new delayed offside rule hasn't been implemented. And most significant, a full game of 20-minute periods, when played against the computer, tends to drag. Against a human opponent, though, it is very strong.

This is a serious game. Unlike many computer hockey games, it downplays fights in favor of realistic play, and goals are very hard to come by. But hockey fans would no more want to be without *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* than baseball fans will want to be without *Earl Weaver Baseball*, and that's saying a great deal.

GP



The editing screen shows the 12 ratings for each player. Highlighted is Bobby Orr who, like Gretzky, is practically superhuman.



On the power play, Montreal passes the puck around trying for the best possible shot on goal. The Boston team prepares to set up in the classic "box" defense.

Hardware requirements: 384K minimum memory; VGA, EGA, CGA, or Tandy 16-color graphics; joystick and mouse optional.

DIRECTORY

DIRECTORY DIRECTORY DIRECTORY

ACCESS SOFTWARE
545 West 500 South
Suite 130
Bountiful, UT 84010

ACCOLADE
550 South Winchester Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95128

ACTIVISION
(a division of Mediagenic)
3885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025

ADLIB
220 Grande Allee Est
Bureau 960
Quebec, Canada G1R 2J1

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS
15235 Shady Grove Road
Suite 100
Rockville, MD 20850

BRITANNICA
345 Fourth Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

CALIFORNIA DREAMS
780 Montague Expwy.
#403
San Jose, CA 95131

CAPCOM
3303 Scott Boulevard
Santa Clara, CA 95054

CINEMAWARE
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Westlake Village, CA 91362

COVOX
675-D Conger Street
Eugene, OR 97402

CREATIVE LABS, INC.
131 South Maple Avenue #6,
San Francisco, CA 94080

DATA EAST USA
1850 Little Orchard Street
San Jose, CA 95125

DYNAMIX
(a division of Mediagenic)
99 W. 10th Street
Suite 337
Eugene, OR 97401

ELECTRONIC ARTS
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404

FTL
(a division of Software Heaven)
6160 Lusk Blvd.
C-206
San Diego, CA 92121

INTERPLAY
1575 Corporate Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

LEISURE GENIUS
(a division of Virgin Mastertronic)
711 W. 17th Street
Unit 9G
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

LUCASFILM
P.O. Box 2009
San Rafael, CA 94912

MAXIS
1042 Country Club Dr.
Suite C
Moraga, CA 94556

MICROPROSE
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030

MILES COMPUTING
7741 Alabama Avenue
Suite 2
Canoga Park, CA 91304

MINDSCAPE, INC.
(a division of The Software Toolworks)
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, IL 60062

NEW WORLD COMPUTING
14922 Calvert Street
Van Nuys, CA 91411

OMNITREND
P.O. Box 733
West Simsbury, CT 06092

ORIGIN SYSTEMS
136 Harvey Road
Building B
Londonderry, NH 03053

PANTHER GAMES
(distributed by Computer Software Services)
P.O. Box 8
Hughes ACT 2605
Australia

PSYGNOSIS
P.O. Box 483
Addison, IL 60101

ROLAND CORP
7200 Dominion Circle
Los Angeles, CA 90040-3647

SIERRA ON-LINE
P.O. Box 495
Coarsegold, CA 93614

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501

SPRINGBOARD SOFTWARE
7808 Creekridge Circle
Minneapolis, MN 55435

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.
1946 North Rengstorff Avenue
Mountain View, CA 94501

STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP
(distributed by Electronic Arts)
1747 Orleans Court
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

SUBLOGIC
713 Edgebrook Drive
Champaign, IL 61820

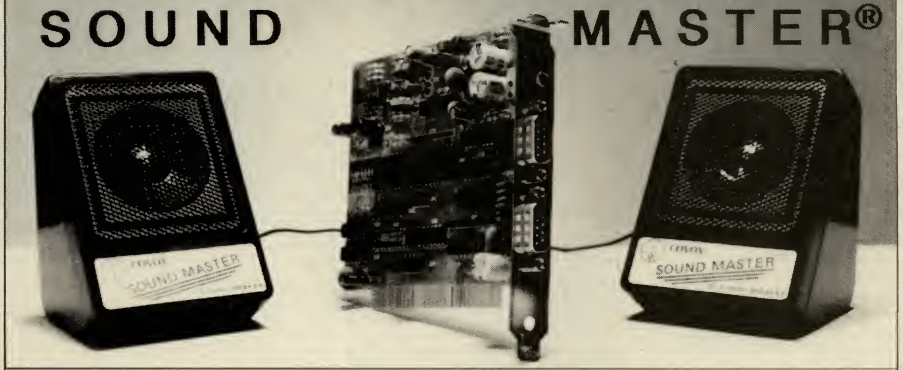
THREE-SIXTY SOFTWARE
2105 South Bascom Avenue
Suite 290
Campbell, CA 95008

AD INDEX

Covox	96
Data East	IBC
Electronic Arts	IFC, 13, 15, 17, 19
Game Tek	31
Innerprise	39
Kemco-Seika	5
Lucasfilm	23
Marketplace	59
Microtyme	59
Origin	7
Radio Shack	27
Roland	25
Sierra On-Line	BC
SPA	45
Spectrum Holobyte	41
SSI	35
Suncom	53
Taito	43
Virgin/Mastertronic	1
Game Player's PC subscription	32-33

THE BEST GAME & SOUND ENHANCEMENT BOARD FOR IBM PC, XT, AT/386 AND ALL TRUE COMPATIBLES FOR ONLY $99.95

SOUND MASTER®



MORE THAN A MUSIC CARD--A LOT MORE!

Sound Master incorporates an advanced 3-voice music synthesizer AND reproduces digitized speech and sound software files--just like an Amiga or Apple IIGS. True multipart music, speech, sound effects...and in STEREO! DMA circuit design allows all sounds and graphics to work together. The Dual DIGITAL joystick ports operate with Atari, Commodore, and other true game-machine joy-sticks and accessories for fast arcade action. Only Sound Master can offer this. Demo, utility, joystick drivers, and sound editing software included.

A *COMPLETE* **PRODUCT** Speakers included! Or use your own stereo headphones or Hi-Fi system. Board installs in minutes into an available slot (not for use with micro-channel bus). One year warranty. Made in U.S.A. Best value for a PC sound board! ONLY $99.95 (plus shipping)

TO ORDER BY PHONE: Call **(503)342-1271** (8-5 PST) and have your VISA/Mastercard ready. Shipping cost is $5 per order, or $8 for fast 2nd day air delivery. Most phone orders processed within 2 working days. Sorry, C.O.D.'s not accepted. If ordering by mail, allow two weeks for personal checks to clear. 30 day return guarantee if not totally satisfied.

Request a list of supporting titles and a free product catalog.

COVOX INC.
675 Conger St.
Eugene, OR 97402

TEL 503-342-1271
FAX 503-342-1283
BBS 503-342-4135

All Trademarks acknowledged as the properties of their respective owners.

Copyright © 1990, Covox Inc. SOUND MASTER is a registered trademark of Covox Inc.

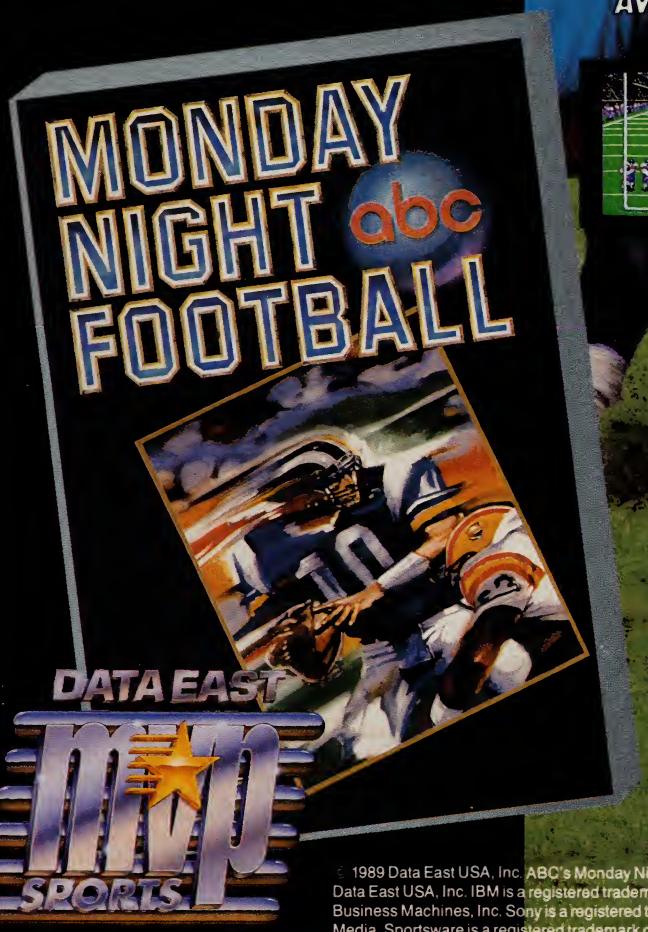
CATCH IT!... IF YOU CAN!

ABC's Monday Night Football Like You've Never Seen Before!

Powerhouse shotguns. Unexpected fumbles, on-side kicks, awesome blitzes and some of the most incredible touchdown runs you'll ever make.

YOU set the formations and **YOU** call the plays. Select from over 40 preset playscreens or, create your own plays. And, the digitized sound technology gives you Frank Gifford's actual voice announcing your most awesome moves.

But, whatever you do – don't be left on the bench when ABC's Monday Night Football kicks off.



AVAILABLE NOW FOR THE IBM-PC/COMPATIBLES AND COMMODORE 64.

SONY Free Interactive Demo

Buy a Sony® ten-pack of 3.5" floppies and receive a FREE interactive demo of ABC's Monday Night Football software game.

Demo includes a special "SONY SPORTBOOK" which gives you additional plays to use with the complete ABC's Monday Night Football game. Available only through SONY and Data East MVP Sports.

Free USA Today Sportsware

Get a **FREE** bonus worth more than **$50** from USA Today Sports Center. With every purchase of ABC's Monday Night Football game, you'll receive **FREE**:

- USA Today Sports Center membership
- Sportsware – communications software
- Online time to the USA Today sports information network.

USA TODAY Sports Center

© 1989 Data East USA, Inc. ABC's Monday Night Football is a registered trademark of ABC Sports, Inc. Data East MVP Sports is a trademark of Data East USA, Inc. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines. Commodore 64 is a registered trademark of Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Sony is a registered trademark of Sony Corporation. USA Today Sports Center is a registered trademark of Gannett New Media. Sportsware is a registered trademark of USA Today Sports Center.

The Best New Game in 2 Years! -Questbusters

SIERRA TAKES A NOT-SO-SERIOUS STAB AT FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING...

SIERRA PRESENTS:
THE ROLE-PLAYING ADVENTURE

After years of leading the field in 3-D Animated Adventure Games, players and critics alike are telling us we have taken the lead in yet another game genre -- Fantasy Role Playing. In **Hero's Quest**, **FRP** means **F**un **R**ole **P**laying.

THREE GAMES IN ONE!
Play the game as your Hero-of-Choice. Will you become the Fighter? The Magic User? The Wily Thief? In **Hero's Quest** the choice is yours...and **Hero's Quest** can be played over and over again using different skills and different solutions to game puzzles.

THIS IS FRP SIERRA STYLE...
As a recent graduate of the ***Famous Adventurers' Correspondence School for Heroes***, you're more than qualified to battle brigands, massacre monsters and rescue royalty. If you're eager to exercise your new credentials, you've come to the right place. The barony of Spielburg is in dire need of a champion, and you just might fit the bill!
Life's not easy for a wanna-be hero, but for every grueling battle, for every hour of work, for every day of adventuring you can only get stronger, swifter and more skillful -- not to mention rich! Soon even the most powerful monsters will be no match for you. When you've purged the land of evil, choose a new role and play the game again!
But remember Adventuring Rule #1: When in doubt, run away! So you want to be a hero? Well, here's your chance -- ***Hero's Quest I--So You Want To Be A Hero***...FRP has never been this much fun!

Choose from three Hero types: Fearless Fighter, Inscrutable Magic User or Wily Thief.

Even the most intrepid Hero knows when to ignore a 'Do Not Feed the Animals' sign.

Hero's Quest players tell us how it is...

'Just got HQ yesterday and am very pleased...some of the humor is priceless.

'...this one has more humor than most CRPG's I've played!'

'The fairies were a riot! Great characterizations in this game, better even than Space Quest III, and that's going some.'

'...much of the humor is a great deal more subtle...the sub thing brought me right out of my chair.'

'I like that ending a lot!!! I want to go back and replay...SOON!

'...one of the best of all of Sierra Games...I play the game every chance I get. I highly recommend it to anyone who likes games by Sierra.'

'We can't wait to play HQ II!! Sierra is getting too good at this stuff. It's getting to the darn point where no other computer games are worth buying. Keep it up...just make MORE games.'

MS-DOS • AMIGA • ATARI ST
1-800-344-7448
or call your local Software Dealer

FREE
PRODIGY®
Interactive Personal Service
Start-up Kit and one month of service *(a $50 value)*
See details in selected Sierra products

SIERRA
SIERRA ON-LINE, INC. • COARSEGOLD, CA 93614